DAVE ARNESON'S

BLACKMOOR

Riders of HAK



Riders of Hak



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Prelude: The Gift of Pesh Briena-Leh

Tri is Peshwah and of the Bortai; Horse warriors first and in the estimation of his tribe, keepers of the old ways. Tri is Hommett. He is a keeper of medicine, a keeper of lore, and the source of old truth. He speaks in dreams to the ancestors and whispers to the elder spirits.

Young eyes spark in the firelight. Young men and women stare up at him. They have been sent here to him in preparation for their rite of horse, for their Pesh Briena-Leh. To fail was shame and another year as less than adult and not truly Peshwah. To succeed was to walk among the people as a person. For one of them, a young man reaching his 20th year, failure would mean he was no longer Bortai and stricken from the role of blood. Other tribes in their weakness would harbor such frailty. Not the Bortai, they clung to the oldest ways in their purest form and gave Hak the homage that was his due. Still, much was at stake for all. Each warrior was needed. The Afridhi walk the Hak and the full might of the people would be needed to reclaim their land. Each warrior lost, whether through weakness of blood or through force of arms, weakened them.

Tri closed his eyes and focused. He spoke.

"All this has been said and done before. All this will be said and done again. The world and the sky have been forever. The night has hung in the sky as long as there has been light. Which came first? I do not know. Only the gods know and there are some that say they are not certain. Each time of man is called an age. Each age comes from its dawn. The dawn of an age breathes life into its gods and gives order to the universe.

"This dawn brought forth Hak. His brother and sister gods set about filling the world with the stuff of their dreams. The Dragons crafted the weave of magic and their lesser kin. Odir crafted the first men, incomplete and incapable of bonding to a horse. Charis brought the gnomes to the land. Dhummon crafted the dwarves from the stuff of the earth. Faunus filled the wooded spaces with the elves, then a whole race and unsplit by their current torment. Hak, however did not first make companions to give him praise and substance, as did the other gods. Hak found himself in the land of grass. He saw the sea of green and the starry sweep of night. He saw the mountains that ring his sacred land and knew that this would be his place. He ran. He ran as a horse runs. He ran for the joy of his strength. He ran from the Goblin Kush to the Spine of the Dragon. Then he was lonely.

The wind had run with him. She whispered to him that she wanted flesh. Hak listened and knew the wind was his friend. She had been his companion as he came to know the grassland that now bore his name. So they took to one another as man and woman will. From their union came the first horses, creatures of wind and earth. Their passage filled the sky with the thunder of their stride and shook the ground with their numbered might. Some traveled with the Horse Lord. Others wandered into the corners of the world, where they were enslaved by the creatures of other gods. Hak grew sad. It was the nature of the horse to wander underneath the open sky and see what joy the world could offer. He knew that his sons and daughters were incomplete and unprotected in the world. The wind and he had made beings of earth and air. Horses were of the sea of grass and perfect in their passion. Still, they lacked the tools of full thought, and stood alone amidst a sea of enemies who would bind them to trades or ride them through force of will and cruelty.

The first men walked upon the Hak. Hak had at times seen and heard of men. He had spoken often to the Elves and found the Elven gods good company. Alone among the Gods, Faunus and Ordana had shared his fire and spoken in honest wonder of the beauty of the horse. Yet, he did not know of man. Hak determined that he must come to know these men. They chased his horses with lust in their hearts. They hungered for the speed of the wind. What drove these passions?

Hak lived among the men of Odir for a cycle of seasons. Many of them were just in their way. The best among them loved the open spaces of the world and sought out those places pristine and untouched by steam, steel and cut stone. Still, for all that was noble in them, there was much that was not. Their hearts were cruel and sought to bind living things to their will. They hungered, and were incomplete. Their souls were deaf and alone. Hak knew pity.

So Hak spoke to the wind. She listened, as was her way. They had made the horse from their passion. The horse was a creature of appetite and fierce pride. The horse contained all that made the wind and land a place primal and fierce in its beauty. They set about making a being not from their passion, but from the substance of their reasoned thought. Hak knew the horse's beauty inspired hatred in the wicked and lust in the weak. He knew that to stand among the races, they must have a protector. He knew that as the men who walked the earth lacked their complete self, so did the horse.

He set about making the perfect man. The wind gave him her breath and labored for him as man was made. She gave herself to the making. Hak took the sweat from the fastest charger and mixed it with the blood of a newborn foal. He spun the dung of the wisest mare and mixed with his breath. He waited as the wind wailed out the torment of this making. He watched as the sky let loose water and rain broke upon the earth. The storm of man's making ended.

Before him stood the first Peshwah, perfect in form and shape, and beloved of their god.

Hak spoke unto them. "I have given you shape from the best parts of my reason. I have made you, the people, in the shape of man, but more than man. Within you rests the spirit of the horse. Even now, your sprit hungers for completion. Even now, a part of you that is missing. You have the shape of man, but you are more. I tell you this, walk upon my sacred lands and find the answer to this longing. Take the sacred journey that rests within you and find what you might be. I give you the gift of Pesh Briena-Leh. You may find completeness with your brothers and sisters of my heart. Go into the grass and be complete. Protect this space as sacred. It is my gift to you."

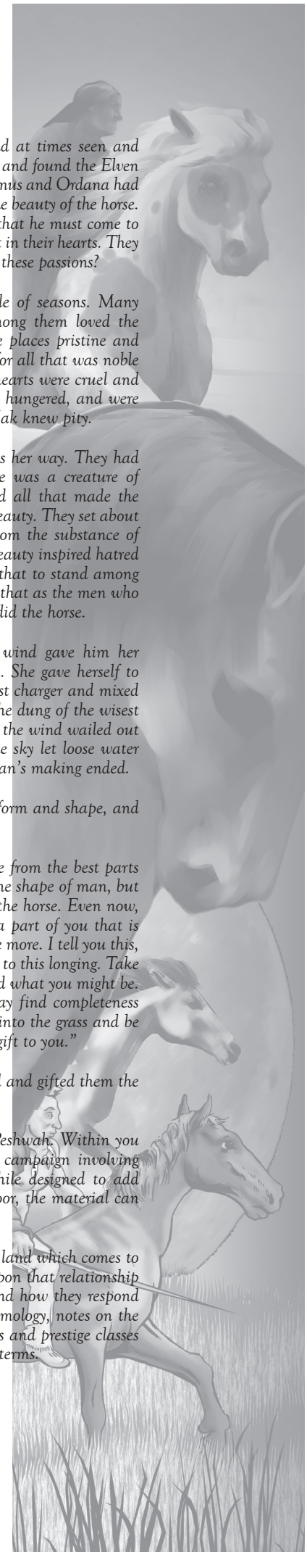
And so Hak brought the Peshwah into the land and gifted them the Hak, his blessed lands."

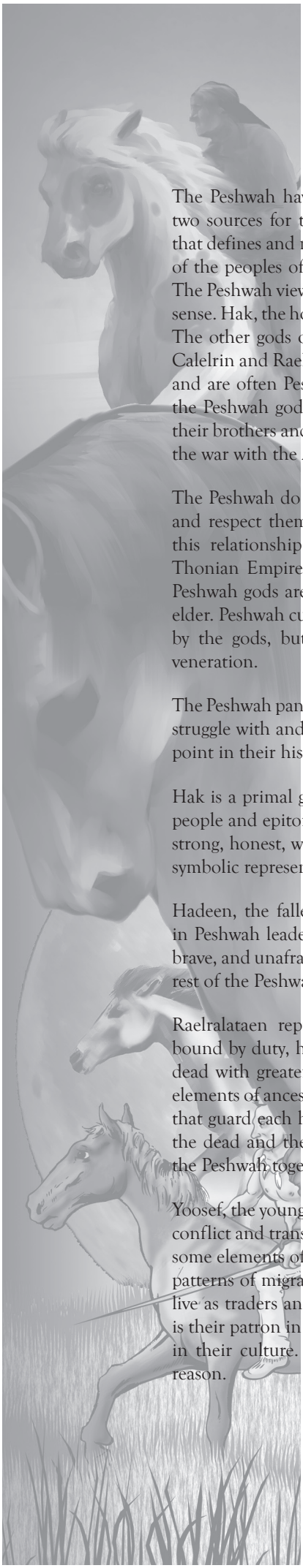
What you hold in your hands is the Book of Peshwah. Within you will find all the material necessary to run a campaign involving the chosen people of Hak, the horseborn. While designed to add depth and contour to Dave Arneson's Blackmoor, the material can be adapted to any setting.

The Peshwah have a special relationship to the land which comes to them through their god. This book elaborates upon that relationship and provides detail on who these people are and how they respond to the world. Within you will find, history, cosmology, notes on the structure of their society as well as various rules and prestige classes that help define who the Peshwah are in game terms.

The land of Hak waits for you. Ride far.

Ride well.





Introduction

The Peshwah have a small pantheon of gods and draw on two sources for their spiritual guidance. One of the things that defines and marks the Peshwah as different from the rest of the peoples of the north is their proximity to their gods. The Peshwah view their gods as family in an intimate and real sense. Hak, the horselord, brought all the Peshwah into being. The other gods of the Peshwah pantheon, Hadeen, Yoosef, Calelrin and Raelralataen, all share this direct lineage to Hak and are often Peshwah ascended from the twelve tribes. All the Peshwah gods save Calelrin, the deceiver, fought beside their brothers and sisters of the Hak during the early stages of the war with the Afridhi and at other points in their history.

The Peshwah do not so much worship their gods as admire and respect them. Their mythology and cosmology reflects this relationship. Where many of the deities of the old Thonian Empire are bound to ritual and sacred texts, the Peshwah gods are held in the same social place as a revered elder. Peshwah culture has many social rites that are overseen by the gods, but very few that are direct forms of social veneration.

The Peshwah pantheon reflects both the changes the Peshwah struggle with and the heritage that has brought them to this point in their history.

Hak is a primal god and the creator. He is the father of the people and epitomizes all the traits the Peshwah value. He is strong, honest, well traveled and, as a centaur a physical and symbolic representation of the blend of man and horse.

Hadeen, the fallen god, represented the best and brightest in Peshwah leadership. He is just and fair, well spoken and brave, and unafraid of facing the same challenges faced by the rest of the Peshwah.

Raelralataen represents that part of the Peshwah that is bound by duty, honor and words. The Peshwah revere their dead with greater vigor than even their gods and there are elements of ancestor worship in many of the day-to-day rituals that guard each hearth. He is the guardian of the ancestors, the dead and the social laws and conventions that bind all the Peshwah together.

Yoosef, the youngest of the gods, came about during a time of conflict and transformation. Many of the Peshwah tribes and some elements of all of the tribes have ceased their historical patterns of migration and transhumance and have begun to live as traders and farmers in small towns and cities. Yoosef is their patron in many ways and represents a transformation in their culture. He is the god of tolerance, thought, and reason.

Calelrin is the god of deception and Hak's actual son. His heart is twisted by jealously and he reflects that aspect of the Peshwah that must be dominant and lead. He is the ego rampant and out of control and this is apparent in the roles he and his worshipper's play in Peshwah culture. They pursue power for power's sake and use whatever means possible, be they fair or foul, to achieve their ends.

Ancestor worship is central to the Peshwah way of seeing and understanding the world. The Peshwah believe that they go to battle as a host with the full might of their ancestors at their side. The day-to-day life of hearth and tent is filed with references to those who came before and the halls of Hak.

Finally, the land itself is a god to the Peshwah. The world is a goddess and all the elements are understood as female. While the pantheon lacks specific female gods, the Peshwah understand the act of creation and the very substance of life as a gift of Sister Earth and Mother Wind. The twisted strands of beads, metal and wire that adorn the tents of the Peshwah are often gifts to the wind and the sun, and part of how the Peshwah understand the universe. The Peshwah are grateful for creation.

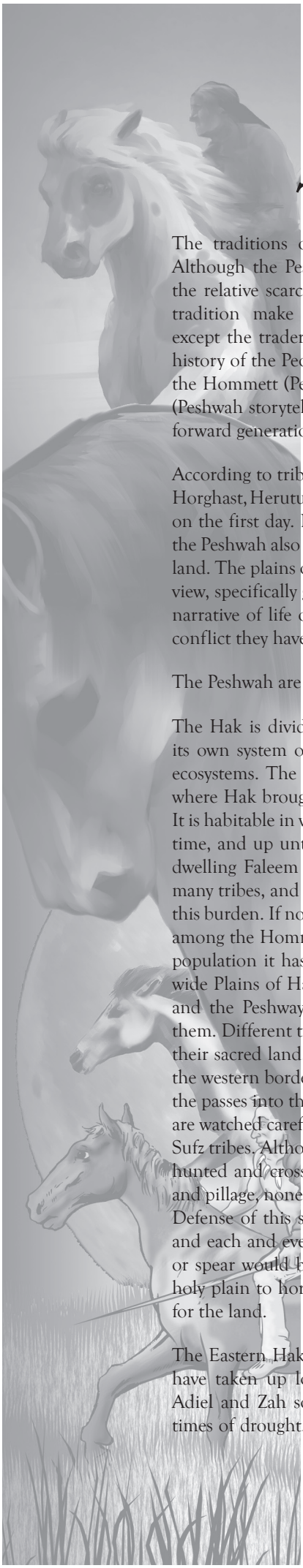
Taken as a whole, the world of the Peshwah is seen through his or her gods. The universe is understood through ties of the sacred and the sacral where the divine family is indistinguishable from the family of clan and tribe.

A Peshwah Glossary

Am: "of"
Apasa: "earth"
Apasapeh: "Sister Earth"
Besh: "tent"
Bri: "bound to"
Briena: "horse bond"
Buhndiwoh: "walker in winter"
Caru: "blood"
Chui: "truth"
Da: "water"
Dwa: "womb"
Difa: "father"
Edru: "lost"
Fa: "born of;" "son of" (male).
Feh: "born of;" "son of" (female).
ga: "small," "lesser"
Ha: "bow"
Hada: "archer"
Haksoja: "saddle mates" (bears the same social weight as "family" or "kin").
Haksojacaru: "the blood of saddle mates" (refers to a class of epic poems dealing with the exploits of Peshwah warbands).

Hadasuja: "truths of the Great Archer" (prophecies of Hadeem).
Hakleh: records of the breeding and bloodlines of horses.
Hidak: "seeker/to seek"
Hika Ai: "It is a good day to die"
Idako: "to stalk," or a "stalker"
Ishi: an expression of will and fate.
Ito: "arrow"
Ji: "flower"
Ka: "star"
Kah: "wind"
Kijiru: "bard"
Lal: "false"
Leado: "first among equals"
Leh: "horse"
Lehcus: "horse blind"
Lish: "woods" or "forest"
Lyn: "river"
Meh: "mother"
Mehulo: "Mother Wind"
Mino: "sighted" (denotes a mystic or prophet).
Muwek: "grass"
Nak: a grave or tomb or barrow.
Nidja: "moon"
Nif: "sun"
Nifnak: "the sun's grave" (west).
Nifdwa: "the sun's womb" (east).
Nusi: "fire"
Pa: a male sibling.
Peh: a female sibling.
Persa na-Shilotan: "spine of the dragon"
Pesh Briena-Leh: the "horse bond"
Peshleh: "horse"
Peshlehla: the Qulaami dire weasel.
Peshlyn: "river people" (refers to those of the Qulaami tribe).
Peshwah: "human"
su: "big" (larger, greater).
Shada: "steel"
Sheh: "caller" (speaker).
Shia am-Caru Shada: "ties of blood and steel"
Shilotan: "dragon"
Shiru: "web thief"
Ska: "heart"
Tesh: "crescent"
Tesh Nidja: "crescent moon" (refers to the sickle sword).
Tok: "gate" or "passage"
Ulo: "wind" or "air"
Uvu: "black"
Wa': "slayer of" (eg, "wa'zeen" is "wolfslayer").
Wuh: "north"
Vilohom: "speaker's staff"
Vuh: "south"
Zeen: "wolf"
Zei: "blade"
Zeiga: "little blade"
Zeisu: "great blade"





Chapter One: The Horseborn

The traditions of the Peshwah are rarely written down. Although the Peshwah have a written form of Peshwahan, the relative scarcity of paper and reliance on an older oral tradition make written communication rare among all except the traders and merchants of the Faleem tribe. The history of the People is passed from speaker to speaker, with the Hommett (Peshwah teachers and priests) and the Kijiru (Peshwah storytellers and bards) carrying the aural tradition forward generation by generation.

According to tribal legends, all Peshwah are descended from Horghast, Herutu, Raelralataen and the other Peshwah created on the first day. Beyond their special relationship to horses, the Peshwah also have a sacred and special relationship to the land. The plains of Hak are named for their god, and in their view, specifically gifted to them by Hak. Peshwah history is a narrative of life on the sacred land, and the challenges and conflict they have known as a result.

The Peshwah are the Hak. The Hak is the Peshwah.

The Hak is divided into three separate plateaus, each with its own system of rivers and each with similar but distinct ecosystems. The High Hak is the central plateau, the place where Hak brought the Peshwah and the horses into being. It is habitable in winter, but a harsh and dry place during that time, and up until the last thirty years, held only the town-dwelling Faleem and the mystics of the Zah. Now it holds many tribes, and as a result, has begun to show the weight of this burden. If not for the constant intervention of the druids among the Hommett, the High Hak could never sustain the population it has been forced to carry since the loss of the wide Plains of Hak. The High Hak is cradled by mountains and the Peshway heavily patrol all passes into and out of them. Different tribes perform different functions defending their sacred land. The Irfat, the Ornidri and Qulaam guard the western border with aggressive tenacity. The Leron guard the passes into the Valley of the Ancients. The eastern passes are watched carefully by the riders of both the Bortai and the Sufz tribes. Although Afridhi, Thonian and Northerner have hunted and crossed into the High Hak for raiding, warfare and pillage, none has stayed long or been able to occupy fully. Defense of this space is a central tenet of their way of life, and each and every Peshwah capable of wielding lance, bow or spear would be slain before they would surrender Hak's holy plain to horse thieves and barbarians with little regard for the land.

The Eastern Hak is the land where the Sufz and the Bortai have taken up long term residence, with elements of the Adiel and Zah sometimes rotating their herds here during times of drought. Winters on the Eastern Hak are brutal by comparison. The winds off the North Sea and across the Tuff River would make life untenable if not for the woods of the Tilverton Greening and other across the Eastern Hak. Until Peshwah naShepro was named Baron of Dragonia, the Peshwah staged many raids into Blackmoor from the plains of the Eastern Hak. Now, with the precious supply of metal provided by the Rusagern and the other cities of Ten eliminated by the invasion of the Afridhi, trade has begun to flow across the eastern Hak as occasionally brave merchants from Blackmoor bring their wares across the open plains. Wise traders certainly bring many "gifts" with them to honor those among the Sufz or the Bortai who might have some concerns over their passage.

The Plains of Hak are the grasslands to the west and south of the Peshwah. They are vast and were the ancestral lands of the Peshwah until taken to them from the Afridhi. The Plains of Hak terminate some thousand miles to the west at the base of the Goblin Kush, the mountains from which the Afridhi scourge first descended upon the west. Brave warriors among the Western tribes, particularly among the Adiel, Somhak, and the Irfat raid into the Hak even now, seeking Afridhi patrols and travelers with vengeance in their hearts.

The Hoop of Years

The lives of the Peshwah have traditionally been defined by the cycle and passage of the seasons. All of the Peshwah tribes have their history rooted in patterns of transhumance and migration and even those tribes that have begun to settle and farm are still closely tied to the land and the cycle of seasons. The Peshwah, in general, live by and for their horses and a large part of their calendar involves the migration across the land in support of their horses and the herds that sustain them. Some of the tribes have traveled farther historically than they do now. All, however, have some element of their population concerned with pasturage and making certain their horses and herds are fed and fed well. For several of the tribes, the pursuit of the grazer herd is central to their existence also. And as the great beasts wander the plains in search of water and fodder, so move the Peshwah.

Before the coming of the Afridhi, the Peshwah year revolved around travel onto the High Hak and a return to either the open plains of Hak for winter. The Eastern Hak was the sole province of the Sufz and the Bortai, who traveled there during high summer and then returned back to the Hak during fall and winter. This path was once the path of all the Peshwah, but only the Sufz, the Bortai, and the most conservative elements of the Adiel routinely made the full journey every year.

The seasons demand different things of a herder's culture. Spring is a time of rebirth and reinvigoration of all the clans. Camberi, the Peshwah New Year, comes at the vernal equinox. The Peshwah meet at Sul Peshwan at this time to

Barter Among the Peshwah

Appraisal and trade are central to the way Peshwah negotiate things. Peshwah have a deep love of beautiful things and things of high utility. Coin, being of limited practical use, is a bit beyond them. As a result, Peshwah barter for most things. In game terms there are several ways to approach this. One way, is to role-play out in detail any exchange of goods or any incident of trade. In many instances, this is perhaps the best way to approach this issue as is allows the DM and player some active in character negotiation that can add contour and flavor to the PC experience as well as bring the PC in close contact with something central to the Peshwah culture. The Peshwah like to haggle.

However, not every group of PCs or campaign is going to embrace this style of play. One way to resolve barter through mechanics is to have PCs make opposed roles based on their profession: merchant. Allow this check to be made untrained and allow a synergy of +2 for at least five ranks of Bluff, Sense Motive, and Diplomacy. When more detail is desired, the following process works well.

Appraise the value of the item following the rules laid out in the *PHB* (p. 67). This is the base price for which the buyer negotiates. The exchange from this point becomes a series of opposed rolls, using any number of skills, with success or failure on the part of the buyer driving the price of the horse up or down by 10% per successful roll. So, for example, let us assume Peshwah na-Ulin am-Faleem is attempting to trade a really nasty looking old mare to Brother Stephen, a cleric of Odir visiting the Peshwah for the first time. Brother Stephen examines the horse in question and makes an untrained Appraise check (rolled by the DM, who finds Stephen does very poorly). Stephen determines that the light warhorse in question must be very special indeed, being worth at least 95 gp.

He turns to Ulin and asks, "How much for this fine horse?"

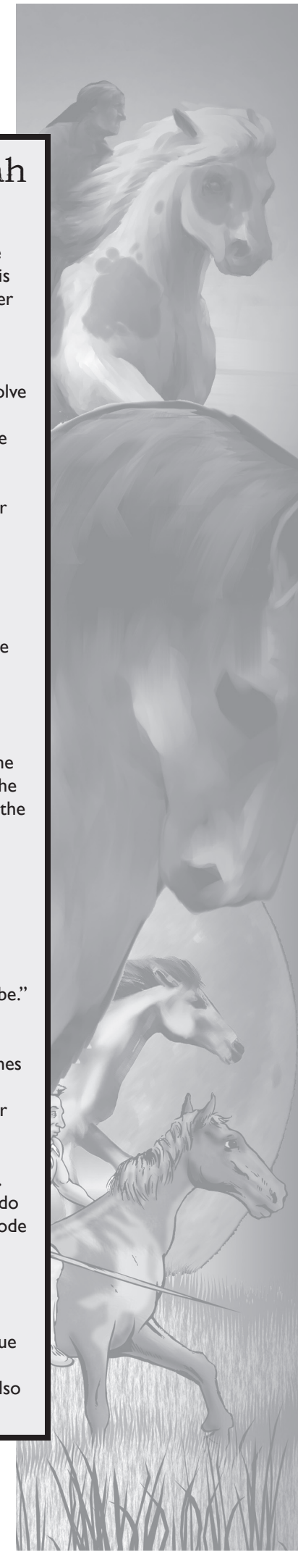
"Oh, this is a descendent of the steppes charger ridden into battle by Peshwah na-Facir am-Irfat at the battle of White Horse. She is a fine brood mare and has given birth to many magnificent stallions!" The DM secretly makes a Bluff check and a Sense Motive check for Brother Stephen, who comes out on the short end. The DM records this and tells Stephen that Ulin appears sincere and that it seems to be a fine horse.

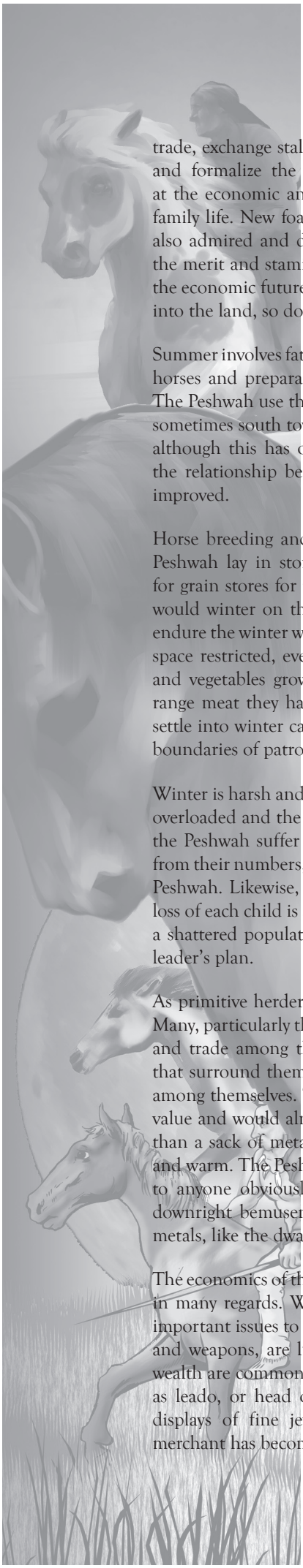
Smelling something wrong here, Brother Stephen decides to examine the horse to see if it is sick or injured. The DM sets this at a DC 15 Heal check, and rolls for the player. The roll is successful and the DM tells the player that the horse has a slight wheeze and is swaybacked. Brother Stephen says, "Peshwah na-Ulin, some miscreant has passed you damaged goods, and perhaps misled you as to the health of this horse. Clearly, it is sickly and could not be the progeny of so fine a horse as you describe."

The DM smirks at this. Peshwah na-Ulin has offloaded many a horse on outlanders, however, and is undeterred. "Oh, honored priest, I see the ways of the Peshwah are unfamiliar to you. This horse comes in trade from my cousin, who assures me its lineage is sound, its health outstanding." Both of these statements are technically true, and the DM makes a Profession (merchant) roll for the player and for Ulin. Ulin does well on the roll.

Brother Stephen decides it is time to uncork his big guns and goes for an opposed Diplomacy check. "So that we are clear, understand that I am a holy man and blessed of my god. I trust you would not do discourtesy to me or to Odir in selling me a horse that would fail me in my time of need. It would bode ill for any man to set one such as I on a path to ruination. You are not such a man, are you?" The DM makes the rolls in question and lets Brother Stephen know that the Peshwah seems taken aback.

This exchange can go back and forth for as long as amuses all parties involved. The process of establishing value for the item offered in trade should also be as involved. As the Peshwah do not value coin very much, increase all prices for goods paid in coin by 25%. Gems and jewelry, however, are traded with Peshwah as goods. Likewise salt, which the Peshwah value at a gold piece per pound, is also traded like goods, rather than coins.





trade, exchange stallions and brood mares, and also to meet and formalize the marriages between clans that function at the economic and political core of Peshwah culture and family life. New foals, brought into the world in spring, are also admired and displayed for all to see. Speculation over the merit and stamina of each new horse is often central to the economic future and status of any tribe. As new life flows into the land, so does it flow into the Peshwah.

Summer involves fattening the Peshwah and the Peshleh, their horses and preparation for the long winter months ahead. The Peshwah use this time of year to raid into Afridhi lands, sometimes south towards Thonia and often into Blackmoor, although this has occurred with less and less frequency as the relationship between the Peshwah and Blackmoor has improved.

Horse breeding and food preparation dominate fall as the Peshwah lay in stores of meat and trade with the Faleem for grain stores for the winter. In the old days, the Peshwah would winter on the Plains of Hak and herds sufficient to endure the winter were easily maintained. With access to that space restricted, even the proud Bortai must eat the grains and vegetables grown by the Faleem and not just the free range meat they had traditionally consumed. The Peshwah settle into winter camps during this time and establish their boundaries of patrol and reconnoiter for the winter.

Winter is harsh and brutal for the Peshwah. The High Hak is overloaded and the Eastern Hak is inhospitable. As a result, the Peshwah suffer each year. Often the eldest are stripped from their numbers, subtracting the wisdom of years from the Peshwah. Likewise, winter is difficult on the young and the loss of each child is a brutal blow to the Peshwah. Rebuilding a shattered population rests at the center of every Peshwah leader's plan.

As primitive herders, most Peshwah have little use for coin. Many, particularly the Briela and the Faleem, use it to bargain and trade among the barbarians, slavers and horse thieves that surround them, but do not normally use coin to trade among themselves. The Peshwah trade for things of obvious value and would almost always have an item of obvious use, than a sack of metal that might or might not keep one fed and warm. The Peshwah speak with quick and obvious scorn to anyone obviously obsessed with money and react with downright bemusement to races that have a deep love for metals, like the dwarves.

The economics of the herder are the economics of subsistence in many regards. Water, forage and pasturage are the most important issues to the Peshwah. All other items, save horses and weapons, are luxuries and viewed as such. Displays of wealth are common among those vying for political position as leado, or head of a clan, and usually take the form of displays of fine jewelry or rare hides. Many a dwarven merchant has become rich trading finely crafted items to the Peshwah. Likewise, many Peshwah youth take tremendous pride in securing the hides of rare and monstrous animals to boost their own prestige or curry favor with their elders.

Peshwah measure the value of all things in horses. When a Peshwah is in serious negotiation for something, he will often talk about its value in horses, differentiating by breed and trading. A Peshwah might say, "That is not even worth one gelded Thonian quarter horse" when taking about something worth less than 75 gold pieces. Alternatively, he might say, "Such a fine sword, with the weight of magic in its blade, is worth four heavy steppes chargers bred by my uncle and trained by my own hand," to barter for a valuable magical sword.

The Role of the Clans

The tribes exist in a delicate balance, with each tribe supporting the other. Some tribes are more overtly commercial than others, with the Faleem, Zah and Peshneath understanding commerce and coin and are quick to take up commercial ventures. The rest of the clans have different degrees of mercantile and economic sophistication. The Sufz have a downright disdain for mercantile behavior as do many of the other clans. These attitudes have steadily faded over time and especially in the current age. With the Plains of Hak lost to them, many of the Peshwah are supported by the farms and trade of the Faleem.

At the center of the web, are the Faleem. Operating from the temple-city of High Tenlish, the Faleem are masters of many metal crafts, agriculture and trade. The Faleem have mastered the creation of papyrus and also craft many of the saddles and tack the Peshwah use. During the last thirty years, the farms of the Faleem have often been the difference between famine and survival for the Peshwah. As a result, more and more clans have learned the art of agriculture from them. This has worked a subtle change on the clans.

The Zah also have a mercantile bent. Known primarily as mystics, the Zah are also responsible for the collection and distribution of the salt collected from the Peshwah's most holy of places, the Tower of Salt. Each chieftain or leado of one of the tribes receives a stipend of salt every year from the Zah to serve his people. However, there is always some excess and that excess the Zah trade effectively and well. While this commerce serves the pilgrims and supplicants who come to the Zah and the Tower of Salt, it is also a source of envy among the other tribes. The Zah do well. Fortunately also for the Zah, and really for all of the Peshwah, the Zah have been fair and just in trade with salt, effectively regulating the entire economy of the Peshwah through the rates of barter and trade they set for salt. It is this even handed fairness that most likely gave the Zah dominion over this resource during the original development of the 12 tribes. This arrangement has endured to this day.

The true wealth of any Peshwah is measured in horses, and the chestnut roan of the Somhak and the dappled gray of the Adiel represent the finest horses among the Peshwah as well as the largest herds. Peshwah see the world in terms of salt and horseflesh and the Somhak and the Adiel pursue worth as they understand it through the breeding of the finest horses they can. Both of these tribes' historical grazing lands in the High Hak are the best and most able to support large herds. The Somhak and the Adiel blend commerce with divine obligation however. Care and breeding of the bloodlines of the horses, the Hakleh, is a sacred duty.

Virtually all of the tribes keep herds of one sort or another and the trade in breeding stock and particularly fertile members of any species is also central to the well-being of the tribes. Among the tribes, the Leron are known for their goats, being nimble and sturdy. Dogs are kept for both their use is security and also as an emergency source of food. The Ornidri are best known for the quality of their hounds. Both the Sufz and the Adiel both are known for their grazers. Among the Sufz though, animal husbandry is practiced by aggressively culling wild herds, and following those herds during their migration patterns. Among the Adiel, this resource has been closely managed to the point of domestication. The quality of both techniques is a bone of contention among all of the tribes.

Several of the tribes make specific and unusual contributions to the Peshwah economy.

The Qulaam are Peshwah living along and often on the Root river. These folks trade gold and fish at Sul Peshwan. The Qulaam have a relatively small population, but their access to both precious metals and alternative food given them an economic power that outstrips their number. The Qulaam are removed from the cycle of migration and transhumance in much the same way that the Faleem are. The Qulaam are tied closely to the Root River and derive their full subsistence from it.

The Peshneath are clever craftsmen and hunters and make the spider silk armor that is the signature armor of the Peshwah. The Chumlish Penarth acts as the seat of Peshneath tribal life. The fortified village is well-defended and the place where virtually all of the spider silk armor worn by the Peshwah is made. Other weapons and armor are also crafted here and the Peshneath have become more and more a tribe of craftsmen and metal workers and less a tribe of hunters since the rise of the Afridhi empire.

The Leron defend the Spine of the Dragon or Persa no Shilotan. Many of the Leron stage consistent and constant expeditions into the Valley of the Ancients. At least once a season some of their number return with items of bizarre power and arcane might. They trade these items either among the Peshwah or to the north with the residents of Blackmoor. Often, it is the Leron who are responsible for bringing an influx iron and steel to the Peshwah as they re-arm.

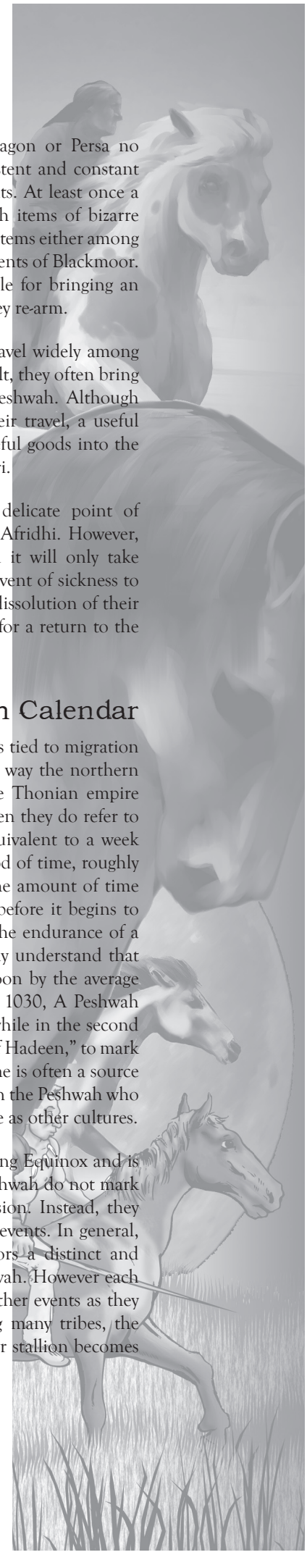
The Briela, alone among the Peshwah, travel widely among the barbarians not of the people. As a result, they often bring special and unusual items back to the Peshwah. Although outright commerce is not the goal of their travel, a useful side effect is the injection of rare and useful goods into the Peshwah economy each and every Camberi.

The Peshwah economy has reached a delicate point of balance since the loss of the Hak to the Afridhi. However, their economic well-being is fragile, and it will only take back-to-back seasons of drought, or the advent of sickness to devastate their population and cause the dissolution of their life. The Peshwah know this and hunger for a return to the open plains.

The Peshwah Calendar

The Peshwah measure time in yearly cycles tied to migration and do not speak of months in the same way the northern merchants or the southern slavers of the Thonian empire do. Rather, they speak of seasons and when they do refer to months, speak of moons. The closest equivalent to a week the Peshwah have is the "ride." This period of time, roughly equal to ten days, is a measurement of the amount of time that a horse can be ridden without rest before it begins to show serious signs of fatigue and wear. The endurance of a horse may vary, but the Peshwah generally understand that only three rides should be taken in a moon by the average horse. Instead of referring to Kavain 25, 1030, A Peshwah says, "During the third moon of spring, while in the second ride, twenty-seven Camberi after the Fall of Hadeen," to mark a date. The lack of the precision about time is often a source of frustration among outsiders dealing with the Peshwah who are not nearly as precise in measuring time as other cultures.

The Peshwah calendar starts with the spring Equinox and is marked by the Camberi. Additionally, Peshwah do not mark their time in a linear consistent progression. Instead, they measure it from significant or auspicious events. In general, a reference to the fall of Hadeen anchors a distinct and absolute point in time for all of the Peshwah. However each tribe and even family and clan may use other events as they communicate among themselves. Among many tribes, the birth of a particularly outstanding mare or stallion becomes a reference also.



Peshwah Family and Clan

The Peshwah are formed into twelve distinct tribes and each tribe has some variations in the way it organizes itself. Each clan is drawn from a common ancestral base and shares a system of familial organization. Peshwah clans are affiliations of families that travel together or live together and share resources.

The Peshwah value familial ties above all else and the strength of this bond colors their interaction with each other and with the outside world.

The central principle of Peshwah culture is deference to the eldest. This principle evens governs property rites and relationships based on marriage. Second to this principle, is the prohibition against marriage within one's tribe. The Peshwah have an intuitive understanding of genetics and inbreeding given their many generations of horse breeding. Likewise, the Peshwah are a combative people that would have long ago disintegrated under internecine infighting and feuding had not a system been established to ameliorate their aggressive and violent nature.

As a balance, no Peshwah may marry within his or her tribe. Likewise, it is not gender that establishes dominance in a relationship, but age. That is, if you are younger than your spouse, your ties to your own clan are replaced by ties to the clan of your spouse as you leave your tribe and join your spouse's tribe. In general, men marry younger spouses from other tribes and absorb them into their family as a result. However, this is not always the case and the Zah stand in stark contrast to the rest of the Peshwah with the women of the tribe almost always taking younger men from other tribes. Like all things among the Peshwah, this also exists on a spectrum with the Zah on the extreme feminine end of the spectrum and the Bortai and the Sufz on the far masculine end.

Ideally, marrying into another clan marks surrendering an old identity for a new one. In practice, the relationship one has with one's old clan never really fades and is renewed each year as the tribes meet. Intrigue between families, clans and tribes is the structural center of Peshwah political life. A marriage well made binds families together along political and economic lines and is, in and of itself, a statement. All tribes have historic allies that they consistently marry with. At the same time, marriages outside of these traditional bonds are not uncommon and often done for specific political reasons.

What's In a Name?

A Peshwah name tells much about the person you are speaking to. All Peshwah announce themselves as Peshwah na. Literally translated, this means the human person named. This is often followed by "am" and the name of the clan. So, a Peshwah of the Adiel would announce himself by saying Peshwah na-Hanso am-Adiel. This would be the person named Hanso of the Adiel. This same Peshwah would refer to his horse as Peshleh na-Culi am-Hanso. Literally translated, this means the horse named Culi of Hanso. Peshwah routinely announce themselves and their mounts, if they share a horse bond with the mount in question.

Peshwah also carry titles they have earned during their lives with them as part of their name. Peshwah na-Sulla am-Somhak kafa Hadeen na, is calling himself the person named Sulla of the Somhak, starborn of Hadeen.

Particularly pious Peshwah will introduce themselves and their horses together, not differentiating between the two. For example, Peshwah na-Vidar am-Sufz bri Nidra. This translates as the person named Vidar of the Sufz, bound to Nidra.

Additionally, Peshwah will sometimes inject their lineage into their introduction of name, listing the older parent before the younger, or leaving the younger parent out completely. For example, Peshwah na-Ulin am-Faleem fa Isga am-Bunir is saying that he is the person named Ulin of the Faleem, son of Isga and Bunir. In this instance "fa" indicates son and "feh" indicates daughter.

The Peshwah are their names and it is not unusual to have duels and conflict over the right to a title or a name. The very self-definition of a Peshwah is tied to his or her clan and family and his or her name is the representation of that person among his brothers and sisters of the Hak. As a result, Peshwah take their names and identities very seriously. There is no quicker way for an outlander to find himself facing drawn steel and a hail of Peshwah arrows than to insult or abuse a Peshwah's name.



Marriage

Aside from taking a bonded mount, there is no more important event in Peshwah society than marriage. Ninety percent of all marriages occur during the Camberi at Sul Peshwan. Marriages are usually a three step process. First, Peshwah parents interested in a particular family or alliance make it know to their clan or specific family that they have an interest in alliance. During that year's Camberi, the young of the families are allowed to interact under supervision and spend some time together. For some families, this is a formal process and the Peshwah in question does not really have a real role in the choice of a mate. For others, perceived compatibility is central to the process and the young Peshwah have a great deal of say as to who they marry. Next, if marriage is desired by all parties, then the elders of the clan meet and discuss the issues finalizing the plans and establishing a suitable proposed dowry. The dowry is given to the clan losing its member to replace the loss of its member and is usually livestock. It is common, although not necessary, to send a child married off to another family with some goods, usually about half the value of the dowry, to help establish a new household. The negotiation of the dowry marks the formal beginning of betrothal.

Betrothed couples are allowed unlimited access to each other during the Camberi and it is not uncommon for children to be conceived during this time. Quite often, this is seen as auspicious, as it strengthens the new family immediately.

Come the next Camberi, the formal marriage ceremony is done. These events are riotous and wild and involve the consumption of massive amounts of libation as well as the exchange of gifts between clans.

Once a Peshwah agrees to a marriage, there is no greater dishonor that can be done to another clan and tribe than to back out of that marriage. Only death severs such a tie of blood among Peshwah and a slight of this nature can be the source of generational feuds. If a Peshwah should be slain during the period of betrothal, then the process must begin again between the two clans, although sometimes one Peshwah, particularly if a sibling or cousin, may be substituted for another if an agreement can be reached between the families prior to the Camberi. This is particularly common if a child has been conceived as a result of the betrothal.

Marriages can take place within clans and tribes during the year. This is common among older couples when a spouse dies. Peshwah may have several spouses during their lives. For example, a Somhak women living among the Irfat might see her first husband slain in battle and marry his cousin. Likewise, she might outlive him and marry another. These sorts of rearrangement are not uncommon.

Divorce is possible within Peshwah culture but is uncommon. All individuals are not compatible and when this is an issue a couple may agree to sever their ties. However, this must be agreed to by the Hommett of their tribe as well as the elders of their clan. Additionally, the Peshwah in question must surrender their children to the clan to raise as the Peshwah view failure in marriage as failure in parenting. Divorce is understood as sometimes necessary and natural but viewed in much the same way as the Peshwah view lightning, grass fire and tornado, a natural hazard and a tragedy.

Kinship

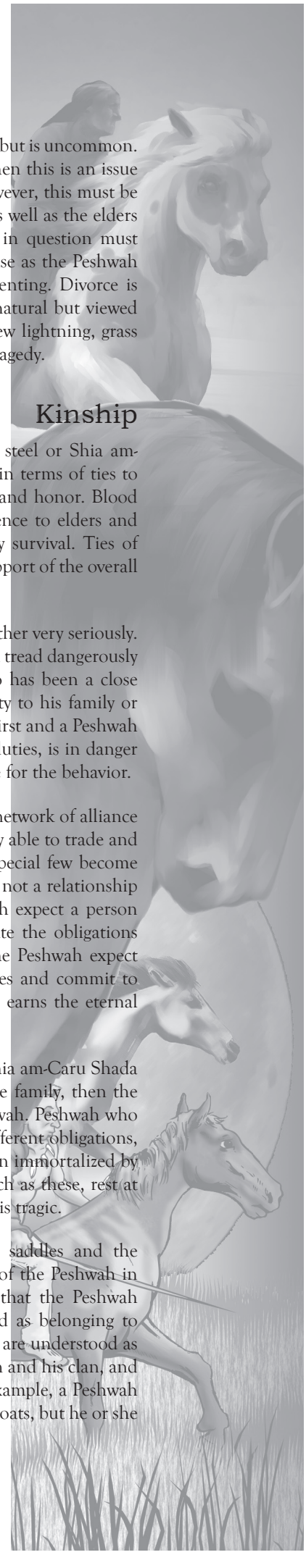
The Peshwah speak of ties of blood and steel or Shia am-Caru Shada. They understand the world in terms of ties to the family and duty and ties of the tribe and honor. Blood ties are ties of kinship and involve deference to elders and support of family members in day to day survival. Ties of Steel, Shia Shada, are alliances owed in support of the overall tribe and the Peshwah in general.

Peshwah take their commitment to each other very seriously. Outlanders who travel among the Peshwah tread dangerously on Shia am-Caru Shada. A Peshwah who has been a close friend and ally can turn quickly if his duty to his family or tribe demands he do so. These ties come first and a Peshwah who does not surrender his will to these duties, is in danger of exile from the clan and loss of his name for the behavior.

Outsiders who successfully negotiate this network of alliance and who come to understand it are usually able to trade and operate within Peshwah culture. A very special few become Peshwah in the eyes of the people. This is not a relationship to be entered into lightly. Just as Peshwah expect a person married from another tribe to subordinate the obligations of their previous life to the new tribe, the Peshwah expect individuals to abandon their previous lives and commit to the Peshwah completely. Failure to do so earns the eternal and forceful enmity of all Peshwah.

Simply put, a Peshwah understands the Shia am-Caru Shada is this way. Honor first the gods, then the family, then the clan, then the tribe and then all the Peshwah. Peshwah who have found themselves in conflict with different obligations, and who struggle to resolve them, are often immortalized by Peshwah bards in epic verse. Situation such as these, rest at the center of Peshwah definitions of what is tragic.

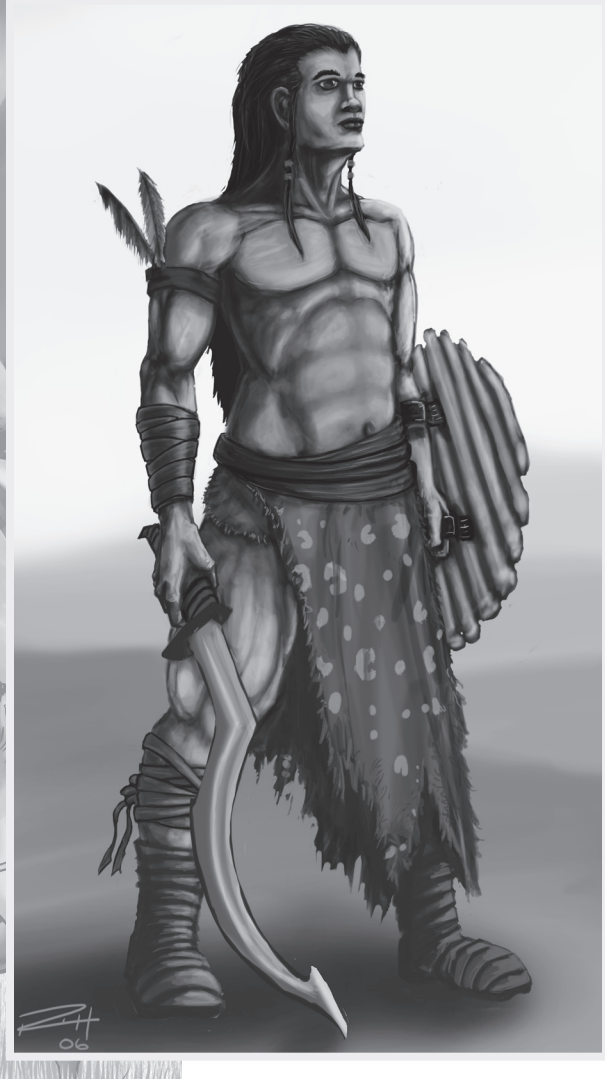
Personal gear, such as weapons, armor, saddles and the like are viewed as the distinct possession of the Peshwah in question. Likewise, trinkets and jewelry that the Peshwah attach personal significance to are viewed as belonging to the Peshwah. Beyond that, all other goods are understood as belonging to both the Peshwah in question and his clan, and sometimes to even all the Peshwah. For example, a Peshwah may have bred and own 20 horses and 14 goats, but he or she



may not dispense with them as she wishes. The elders of his or her clan must agree to any proposed trade or use of the herd animals. On a grander scale, if a Peshwah comes across an item of great mystical or magical meaning or significance, it is understood the Peshwah should surrender that item to the people for use. Most often, the Peshwah in question will be able to keep the item, but he or she understands that the needs of all the Peshwah take precedence over his or her own, and the item may be called for if needed by the clan. In game terms, assume that any item over 10,000 gp in value is viewed in this way.

The Peshwah Man

Peshwah men are most often skilled in the use of weaponry. Ranger is the favored class of the Peshwah and very many Peshwah pursue these skills at some point during their lives. At its base, Peshwah masculine culture is about trial by arms and the defense of family and clan from enemies and a harsh environment. As more and more Peshwah settle into an agrarian lifestyle of necessity, this focus has subtly shifted, but it is still the ideal.



Peshwah spellcasters are usually priests, druids, or bards, and make up less than 10% of the male population. Peshwah storytellers and poets are highly valued in their culture as all their historical traditions are aural. Likewise, the role of the Hommett is usually male, and more often held by a cleric than a druid.

Peshwah sorcerers and the very rare wizard are often seen as oddities. Male arcane spell casters lack of martial prowess and usual failure to horse bond are viewed with suspicion. Additionally, Peshwah woman, particularly the Zah, normally perform this role and prejudice along lines of gender also comes into play.

Peshwah boys, regardless of tribe, are exposed to mounts they can bond with from a very early age. Even the Faleem, Ornidri and Peshneath, tribes more distant from the herder origins of the Peshwah; give their boys horses at an early age. Peshwah competitions of skill involving horses begin early and are consistent throughout a Peshwah's life. Peshwah boys learn to race horses early and often and this never ceases to be a part of their lives.

Peshwah boys are trained by their elders, be it in the skills of the hunt, or the history of their people. The concept of saddle mate, or haksoja, is central to the development of a Peshwah warrior. Young boys spend much of their times with their cousins and the other youth of their tribe. In many of the tribes, some of the young women also, "Hear the voice of sister wind" and choose to train and travel with the boys. These people have access to the same training and experience of the young boys, and often choose the same career paths.

Among the more traditional tribes, including the Bortai, the Sufz, the Irfat and the Adiel, adulthood and full membership in the tribe does not occur until the young man in question takes a bonded mount. Those who fail in this process are often ejected from the tribe, and just as often live a life of exclusion and shame. Some travel to High Tenlish to join a special order of monks devoted to Raelralataen, the Peshwah god of law, who have not been able to bond with a horse. The members of these tribes consistently bond to a series of horses throughout their lives, always seeking out the companionship of horses and only relinquishing the bond when old ages settles in and their impending demise would mean madness and destruction for their bonded mount.

Among the other tribes, taking a bonded mount marks a passage into adulthood, but is not grounds for dismissal from the tribe, nor is life in a bond the lifelong expectation of the Peshwah. Among the Faleem, young Peshwah travel as Nomads while bonded and eventually settle down into a life as a merchant or farmer when they lose their horse to age or combat. A constant theme for all Peshwah is sympathy or disdain for the horse blind or Lehcus. Among outsiders, it is

considered a mark of their inferiority. Among fellow Peshwah, it is a mark of weakness of spirit or lack of devotion, and makes the Peshwah in question subordinate in their society.

The Qulaam bond with dire weasels because of a special blessing of Hak. They are as conservative and intolerant of those among them who cannot take a dire weasel bond as the Bortai and Sufz. However, their focus comes from a different species.

Adult Peshwah males are expected to be the providers and protectors of their tents. For many tribes this means the Peshwah are responsible for the development and cultivation of the herds that are the staple of Peshwah survival. There is also the expectation that any Peshwah is adept with weapons and is willing to stand and defend his tribe and family in combat at any moment. Peshwah warriors are expected to be brave, not foolish. The Peshwah prefer a well-executed ambush to a head to head fight. The Peshwah are comfortable taking victory in small bits. It is better to kill six Afridhi and take no wounds than to win a hard fought brawl where three Peshwah die but manage to kill twenty Afridhi. Adult male Peshwah are expected to be cunning, strong and unafraid.

Male Peshwah are expected to be vigorous and able in combat into old age. Infirmity is hard for most Peshwah. A Peshwah male who can no longer fight is expected to be "wise in counsel" and be able to guide the youth and others of his tribe with the knowledge he has accumulated over his lifetime. Older Peshwah men usually also become adept at some craft, whether that be cobbling shoes or making arrows. All must contribute in Peshwah culture.

Many a gray hair dominates the fire in his yurt with tales of his past glory and the history of the people. Elder Peshwah are respected and protected by the people. However, it is not uncommon for a Peshwah who knows that he has become a drain upon the resources of his clan and family to take his last ride, mounting a favored horse and riding out into the High Hak in winter calling for Mother Wind to take him home to Hak's halls.

The Peshwah Woman

As the Peshwah man is responsible for the world outside of the tent, the Peshwah woman is responsible for the world inside of the tent. Peshwah women practice herbalism and almost all have some healing skills. Arcane arts and magic flow easily to Peshwah women and many adepts live among their population. Likewise, the bulk of Peshwah arcane power comes from the women of the tribes. Peshwah druids are more often women than men and female wokan are very common. Female Peshwah bards are revered among their people as storytellers.

Female sorcerers and wizards do not face the same prejudice that male casters do, but remain far from mainstream in their culture. They very seldom marry out of clan and often live childless and horseless. They are married to their art.

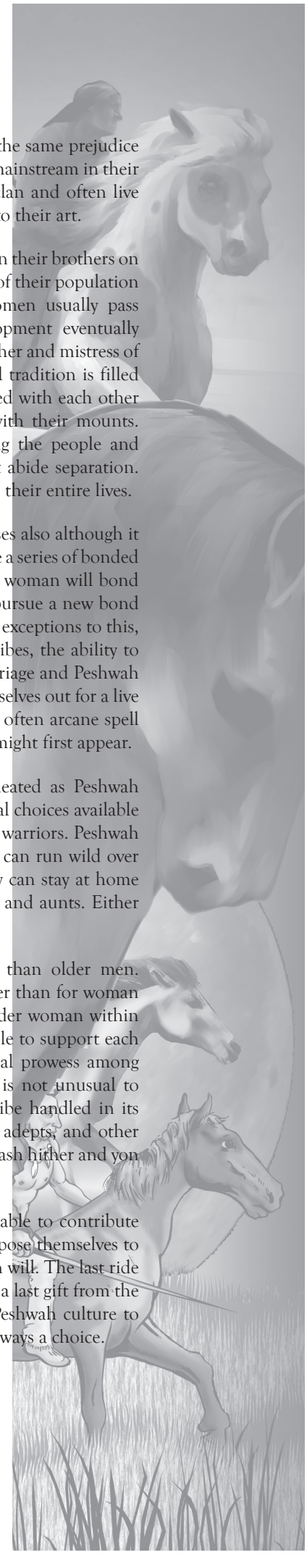
It is not unusual for Peshwah women to join their brothers on the open plains and about twenty percent of their population is trained in martial combat. These women usually pass through this as a stage of their development eventually settling into a more traditional role of mother and mistress of her family's tent. However, Peshwah aural tradition is filled with tales of women and men who bonded with each other with the same ferocity that they bond with their mounts. These sacred bonds are legendary among the people and couples who share this fierce love cannot abide separation. As a result, they ride and fight side by side their entire lives.

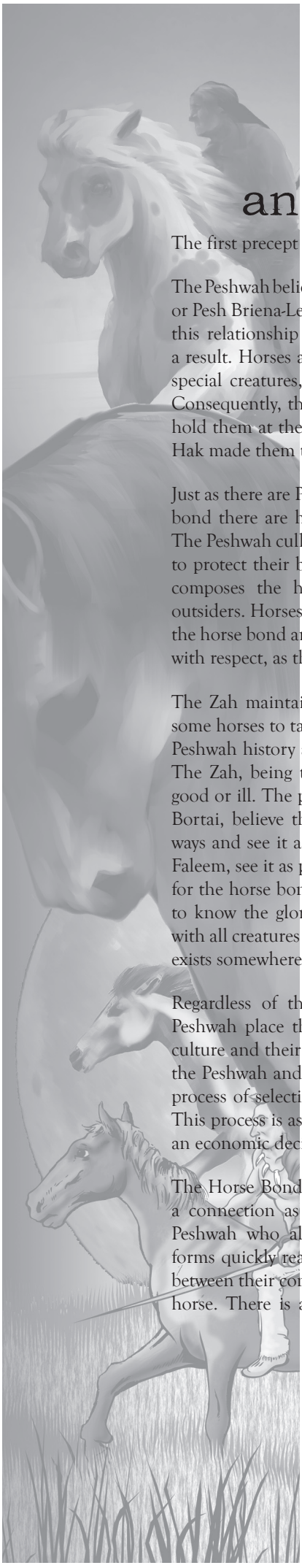
Peshwah women routinely bond with horses also although it is less common for Peshwah women to have a series of bonded mounts like men do. Typically a Peshwah woman will bond with a mount during her youth and not pursue a new bond after her first children are born. There are exceptions to this, of course. Among the more traditional tribes, the ability to bond with a horse is the precursor to marriage and Peshwah woman who choose not bond, single themselves out for a live of isolation. As many of these women are often arcane spell casters, this is not usually the hardship it might first appear.

Peshwah girlhood is not as clearly delineated as Peshwah boyhood. Women actually have more social choices available to them. Peshwah men are expected to be warriors. Peshwah women can *choose* this role. Peshwah girls can run wild over the plains with their male cousins or they can stay at home tending hearth and tent with their sisters and aunts. Either role is acceptable.

Older woman also have an easier time than older men. Peshwah mortality rates for men are higher than for woman in most circumstances. As a result, the elder woman within a tribe are usually more numerous and able to support each other. Likewise, the expectation of martial prowess among women is diminished by comparison. It is not unusual to see the day to day administration of a tribe handled in its entirety by a coven of venerable Peshwah adepts, and other spell casters, while the men among them dash hither and yon across the plains raiding and hunting.

Peshwah women who find themselves unable to contribute to their family and tribal life will often expose themselves to the elements in the same way that the men will. The last ride is a fixture of Peshwah culture and seen as a last gift from the person to the tribe. It is unheard of in Peshwah culture to force this upon an elder. The last ride is always a choice.





The Peshleh and the Peshwah

The first precept of Hak: *"Horse and man make a perfect soul."*

The Peshwah believe that Hak has gifted them the Horse Bond, or Pesh Briena-Leh. Indeed all of their culture is built around this relationship and the unique partnership developed as a result. Horses are understood by the Peshwah to be Hak's special creatures, but they are also understood as animals. Consequently, the Peshwah treat horses extremely well, and hold them at the center of the culture, but understand that Hak made them to complete the horse.

Just as there are Peshwah who cannot or will not take a horse bond there are horses that suffer from the same affliction. The Peshwah cull these from their herd and geld the stallions to protect their breeding stock. This part of the population composes the horses that the Peshwah will trade with outsiders. Horses that have demonstrated an inability to take the horse bond are viewed with great sadness, but also viewed with respect, as they are Hak's creatures.

The Zah maintain that the inability of some Peshwah and some horses to take the horse bond is a new development in Peshwah history and marks a change for all of the Peshwah. The Zah, being the Zah, refuse to say if this change is for good or ill. The purists among the Peshwah, particularly the Bortai, believe this comes from a divergence from the old ways and see it as a fall from grace. Others, particularly the Faleem, see it as part of Hak's plan and believe that the need for the horse bond will gradually disappear as all men come to know the glory of Hak's most blessed creature and live with all creatures as equals. Most Peshwah belief on this issue exists somewhere along this spectrum.

Regardless of the belief of each particular tribe, all the Peshwah place their horses in a special place within their culture and their daily lives. Horse breeding is an art among the Peshwah and much thought and planning goes into the process of selecting mates and developing a proper lineage. This process is as much sacred duty to many Peshwah as it is an economic decision.

The Horse Bond itself in any of its permutations is as pure a connection as one can have with another living thing. Peshwah who allow their bond to evolve into its varied forms quickly reach a point where they cannot differentiate between their consciousness and experience and that of their horse. There is a progression in the bond from an ability to speak with and empathically understand their mount to a telepathic state. Some Peshwah share spells easily with their mounts and others seem to transfer damage with their mount, almost sharing one flesh. At the core of the bond is a connection between living things that transcends single isolated identity and points to one unified consciousness. The Peshwah believe that in the afterlife they will join with their mounts and with their god Hak in a state of perfect bliss in the Halls of Hak.

A Peshwah in an active horse bond with a horse has a special place among the Peshwah. Both horse and rider are given first access to food. A Peshwah in an active horse bond is considered more trustworthy than other Peshwah, as his or her horse has little tolerance for dishonesty and will chide and deride such behavior in its partners. Likewise Peshwah in a horse bond are always considered more suitable candidates for marriage. During mating season, Peshwah in a horse bond are given a bit of latitude in that their mood can be affected profoundly by the emotional and biological condition of a Peshwah's bonded mount. Acts of violence during this time are understood in the context of the bond.

Entering a horse bond is a momentous occasion for any Peshwah, but especially for young Peshwah. Most Peshwah enter the horse bond between the ages of 14 and 20. Central to this process is selecting the right mount and this is a process that the Peshwah take very seriously. The energy that goes into the process of selecting a horse for the bond is just as focused as the energy devoted to picking a spouse. Often, breeding an appropriate horse for a Peshwah begins soon after his or her birth, and will involve consultation with the Hommett of the tribe as well as the tribes most practiced and skilled breeders. Each tribe has its own theories about what makes the best sort of horse for a first bond, but all tribes share a respect for the process and the result.

Entering into the bound has some very specific obligations. Abuse of the bond is one of the most heinous crimes in Peshwah culture. A Peshwah who causes his or her horse to be killed out of cowardice or from neglect will be banished at the very least and may very well be executed. The horse and the bond are sacred. Peshwah entering into a bond are expected to view the horse as a member of their household and their kin. The ties of Shia am-Caru Shada are just as binding to the bonded horses of a clan as they are to its other members. A bonded horse is no different than any other member of the Peshwah nation in the eyes of Peshwah law and a criminal act against horse is the same as a criminal act against the horse's partner.

Breeding Horses

The Peshwah have developed the sturdy stock of the steppes chargers over many centuries. The game statistics of these animals are provided on page 207 of the Blackmoor Corebook. The horses are compact and sturdier pound for pound than any other horse. That being said, the Peshwah are aware that every breed of horse might have something to offer and constantly scout fine horses. Peshwah raiders into Blackmoor and other areas often specifically seek out the finest horses they can and the Peshwah have a scathing reputation among the other races as horse thieves for a reason.

Each Peshwah horse has a lineage as long and profound as his partner in the bond and many Peshwah bards can recite the lineage of famous horses with the same skill and aplomb as they can recite the history of a famous leado. Likewise, most Peshwah can discuss horse breeding and its consequent choices with the same aggressive vigor a Blackmooran discusses politics. It is the devotion and obsession of the nation.

The most important gift one can provide a tribe is a well-bred horse, or one from a strong bloodline. Resolutions of major conflicts often involve the exchange of horses. This is a two-edged sword for the giver, however. Giving the correct horse can set the tone for years to come. Likewise, giving the wrong horse can establish a long-term grudge over the slight.

The Coming of the Afridhi

Peshwah na-Ikiru am-Zah, wokan and sacred to her people, looked across the fire at the outlanders before her. They had shown that they were just and true, as outlanders could be, by shedding blood and drawing steel for her. Their eyes had the hunger of knowing to them, and she knew they sought to understand the great enemy. They sought to understand the Afridhi, those who would burn the world to appease their twisted god. These folks styled themselves heroes of the north. Ikiru believed they saw themselves in that light and would do no ill. She brought her Ishshi, her destiny and purest manifestation of her will, into focus, and began to speak. She would launch these outlanders like arrow from her bow at the heart of Zugzul. She would string her bow with truth.

"I speak of Hadeen and his fall. I speak of Zugzul and the darkness of his spirit. I speak of Calelrin, that part of the Peshwah heart colored by jealousy and rage. To understand the great enemy, one must understand the Peshwah, for Hak has set us against them."

"That the Peshwah were among the first to face the wrath of the Afridhi is well-known. That Hadeen, son of Hak and the Peshwah god of archery and leadership, was slain is also well-known. How the two are bound in fate is unknown to the people of the north. Yet this story is spoken across many a Peshwah fire, as we speak now. The loss of Hadeen rests heavy in our hearts and marks the people. Yet our anguish is small beside that of Hak, who wails in loss for his fallen son.

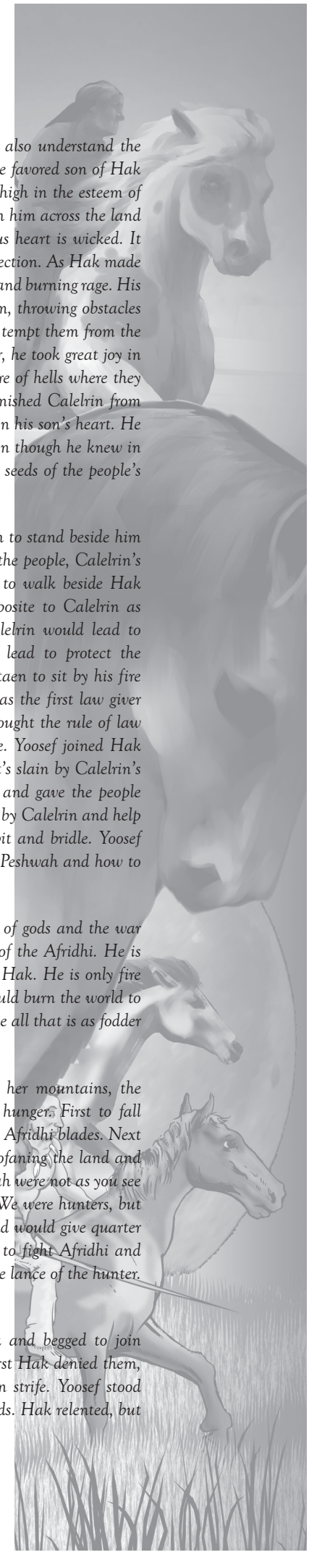
"To understand the fall of Hadeen, one must also understand the jealous heart of Calelrin. Calelrin was once the favored son of Hak and first in all Hak's creation. Calelrin stood high in the esteem of Hak and stood at his right hand, traveling with him across the land and taking in all of creation. Calelrin's jealous heart is wicked. It could not abide competition for his Father's affection. As Hak made the horses and Peshwah, Calelrin knew a fierce and burning rage. His hate for them grew and he plotted against them, throwing obstacles in their way and doing all within his power to tempt them from the path Hak would have them walk. The deceiver, he took great joy in luring the Peshwah into damnation and the fire of hells where they could feed his hunger and his hatred. Hak banished Calelrin from his tent as he came to know the darkness within his son's heart. He could not bring himself to slay his first son, even though he knew in his heart that Calelrin carried within him the seeds of the people's destruction. That is another story.

"As Hak chose others from among the Peshwah to stand beside him as protectors of both his sacred lands and also the people, Calelrin's hatred knew no bounds. Hadeen was chosen to walk beside Hak because of his noble heart. Hadeen is as opposite to Calelrin as water to fire or darkness to light. When Calelrin would lead to amass power and dominate, Hadeen would lead to protect the weak and grow the herd. Hak asked Raelralataen to sit by his fire because he understood justice. Raelralataen was the first law giver of the Peshwah, a man as Hadeen was, he brought the rule of law to the people and saddled the fury of our rage. Yoosef joined Hak too. Yoosef was born from the blood of Prophet's slain by Calelrin's hateful servants. Hak took this as a sacrifice and gave the people Yoosef to counter the ignorance and lies spread by Calelrin and help them put their reason to harness and under bit and bridle. Yoosef shows us how to make the new things we find Peshwah and how to walk among the children of Odir as equals.

"The story of the Afridhi, you see, is the story of gods and the war among them. Zugzul is the black-hearted god of the Afridhi. He is not the mixture of elements in balance that is Hak. He is only fire and his heart burns in hunger and lust. He would burn the world to feed his hunger and the Afridhi, his servants, see all that is as fodder for his flame.

"Zugzul sent his bride Toska Rusa out from her mountains, the Goblin Kush, the goblin killers, to feed that hunger. First to fall were the men of the Vales, overrun and slain by Afridhi blades. Next the Afridhi began to march upon the Hak, profaning the land and hunting the Peshwah. In those days, the Peshwah were not as you see them now. We were raiders, but not warriors. We were hunters, but not soldiers. We shared mercy to fallen foes, and would give quarter when quarter was due. This was not the way to fight Afridhi and they drove use before them like grazers before the lance of the hunter. Zugzul laughed as the Hak burned.

"Hadeen and Raelralataen stood before Hak and begged to join their brothers and sisters upon the plain. At first Hak denied them, unwilling to risk the sons of his heart in open strife. Yoosef stood before him and argued the plea of his fellow gods. Hak relented, but



made clear what they asked. 'To stand with men, you must fight as men, mortal and of flesh and blood. Mother wind and sister earth may not lend you their strength. You rise or fall as men do, by your cunning and prowess of arms.'

"Hiki Ai!" said the two. "It is a good day to die," in the language of the people. Hak relented and the two took to their saddles with the horses of their heart and struck the plain like lightning, the thunder of their charge announcing their presence to the Afridhi. The Afridhi knew fear.

"At first the Afridhi were unsure what they faced. Raelralataen led the Irfat against them. Like ghosts they struck, each time the Afridhi massed to strike, the sons and fathers of the Irfat faded into the Hak, leaving dead Afridhi in their wake. Hadeen stood with the Somhak. He filled the sky with arrows and try as they might, none of the Afridhi could reach him. All who tried lay stretched upon the ground, an arrow from his blessed and unending quiver planted in their eye.

"The Afridhi advance faltered. The tribes formed upon the Somhak and the Irfat and the twelve began to strip away Afridhi from the horde, like hunters strip the weak and slow from the grazer herd. Blood soaked the plains of Hak and the Caru Kah blew all spring.

"Zugzul was enraged and sent his forces in multitude onto the Hak. 'Burn all you find', was his order. The twelve tribes retreated as the Afridhi advanced, striking at their supply lines and stealing their horses. The camps left the Plains of Hak for the last time, seeking shelter on the High Hak behind the wall of Hak. The tribes massed, ready for one last battle. Hadeen and Raelralataen laughed as the Afridhi poured across the plain. Their baggage train stretched two rides behind them and half of their number was deployed along it to defend against the Peshwah. The Afridhi came on.

"Hadeen and his brother Raelralataen sprang their trap and the Peshwah struck, stripping the Afridhi cavalry from the host and then dropping their infantry as they came on. The Afridhi chased smoke. The Peshwah would not match spear and lance against the Afridhi. Instead, they let their bows speak death unto the enemy. The Afridhi fled. Man and horse make a perfect soul. So too, they make a perfect warrior.

"Calelrin waited. Long had he planted hatred and jealousy in the hearts of the weak among the Peshwah. Some among the Peshwah listened and plotted against Hadeen and Raelralataen. On the night of their victory over the Afridhi, they struck. Yet, the best of the Irfat defended Raelralataen, and the watchers of Naktok caught the assassins and brought them low as they crept into his tent. Hadeen, however, disdained such protection and slept among the people in open camp. The agents of Calelrin set upon him as he slept. Hadeen was slain.

"Hak had given him mortal form, but the blood of the divine still beat within his heart. Hadeen arched skyward bow and quiver in hand. He called out his father's name and cast his bow and quiver into the night sky, the night turned day by his passage. Hadeen, sky fallen, fell to us again, his body still and unmoving. The Somhak and Adiel slew his murderers. Still Hadeen was lost to us.

"Hadeen's horse, Uri, was stricken by the rage of loss and broke free from the tethers of the line. His scream of loss and rage shook the sky. In the camps of the battered Afridhi, they heard the cry and then the thunder of hooves as Uri sought out the object of his brother's hatred. Uri too, died that night as he ravaged the camp of the Afridhi, the drum of his heart stopped by an Afridhi spear.

"Raelralataen gathered up his brother's body and spoke to us all. 'Hak has recalled me to his hall, and asked I bring Hadeen home. The Afridhi will come again. Hunt them. Be wise. What you cannot match in numbers, match in cunning. Luck of the Hak to you my brothers and sisters.'

"So did Raelralataen descend into the barrows of Naktok with his brother's body and leave us to carry on the fight. Calelrin laughs and there are those among us who believe that he shares a fire with Zugzul and plans the destruction of the people.

"The Afridhi have grown cautious of the Peshwah. The plain is littered with stockades and forts all built to guard against our raiders. We follow the words of the god. We hunt. We are cunning. The Afridhi whisper the names of the Peshwah at night around their fires and know fear. We grow in number and wait our time as the Afridhi spend their might against the nations of the north.

"Someday, we will hunt them again, under the Goblin Kush. Someday we will hunt their god, bringing fire to his temples and killing his priests. We will diminish his power and we slay his followers. Someday, he will stand before the Peshwah, naked save for his fear, as our arrows strike him and feed his black soul to hell.

"So say the Peshwah. So say we all."



Death of the Sacred Bond

In game terms a Peshwah severed from his horse suffers various penalties. Most negative effects last for one week, but there is certainly a social stigma attached to the loss of a mount too. Most Peshwah will withdraw from Peshwah society during that time and are truly not fit company. A Peshwah who loses more than one mount in a year will be commonly understood as cursed by his people and faces social consequences as a result.

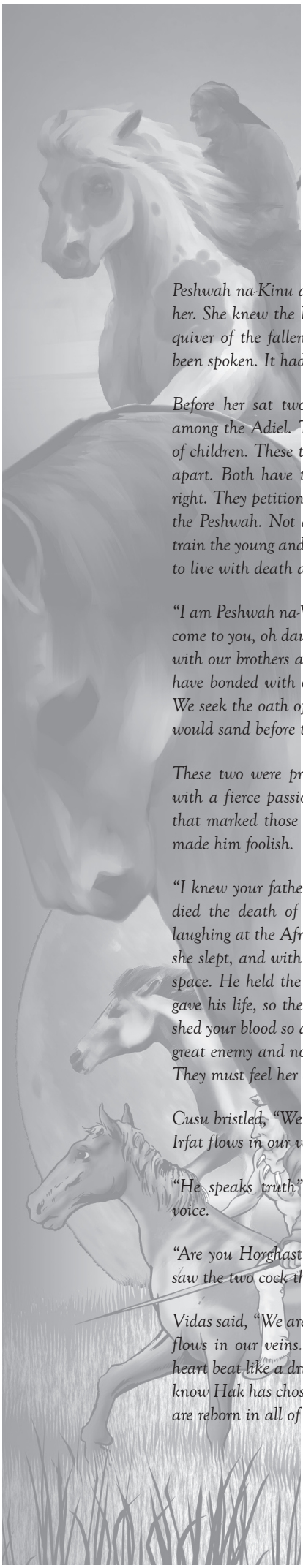
Peshwah and horse do not willingly separate for extended periods of time. A Peshwah wants to be within calling distance of his mount at all times. If a Peshwah in a bond is ever physically separated from his mount for more than ten days, the bond is considered severed and the Peshwah in question must renew the bond as specified by the feats or feats that govern it.

In game terms any Peshwah character may bond to any horse. Likewise any horse the PC targets will also accept the bond. Peshwah prefer bonding to steppes chargers but do not have to do so. New players who choose to delay taking horse bond until they progress in level may certainly do so but face some social consequences depending on their tribe. Quite often players may choose to do so to make certain their mount is durable and can survive the rigors of adventuring.

When a bonded Peshwah horse loses its rider to violence, it will rage as a barbarian rages, and further will not be able to distinguish friend from foe. It will stay in this state for 10 minutes, until it is slain, or until the being or creature that slew its partner is dead. This is a very extreme trauma for the horse involved as the horse lacks the cognitive function to deal with the loss. If the horse survives its rage filled state, it will never be able to bond with another Peshwah, although it will gladly re-bond with its original partner if he or she should be raised.

A horse that is merely separated from its partner does not go into the frenzy described above. It will be disoriented and foul tempered and unable to bond with another Peshwah. It will, however, quickly accept and re-bond with its old partner should he or she return.





Chapter Two
Two Bodies, One Soul

Peshwah na-Kinu am-Irfat carried the curse of the black riders with her. She knew the Irfat must spend themselves like arrows from the quiver of the fallen god so that the great enemy might fall. It had been spoken. It had been written. It was so.

Before her sat two brothers, both born of the Irfat, but fostered among the Adiel. There was little space in Irfat life for the raising of children. These two had been born to her cousin, less than a year apart. Both have taken the bond of the black horse as was there right. They petitioned her now to join the great war and ride among the Peshwah. Not all who asked were accepted. Other tribes could train the young and give them hope and a future. To live as Irfat was to live with death as your lover.

"I am Peshwah na-Vidas, and this my brother Peshwah na-Cusu. We come to you, oh daughter of the Sirk, to claim our birthright and ride with our brothers and sisters. I speak the truth of Raelralataen. We have bonded with our first horse and have lance and bow and ax. We seek the oath of the ancestors and of Horghast and Herutu. We would sand before the Peshwah and face the enemy."

These two were proud young men. Their black eyes were charged with a fierce passion and regarded her over the sharp hooked nose that marked those of Irfat blood. Pride made a man brave. It also made him foolish.

"I knew your father well. He rode in the Haksoja of Hadarsh and died the death of hero. He risked much and paid all, but died laughing at the Afridhi. He slit the throat of a priestess of Zugzul as she slept, and with his saddle mates stole the contents of her sacred space. He held the rear guard as the others fled into the night and gave his life, so the others might live. Are you such as he? Will you shed your blood so another might live? Will you face the might of the great enemy and not flinch?" she regarded them with a slight smirk. They must feel her doubt and she wore it on her face with a sneer.

Cusu bristled, "We are our father's son. Blood of Adiel and blood of Irfat flows in our veins. We claim our right to swear the oath."

"He speaks truth" his brother said, rage an undercurrent in his voice.

"Are you Horghast and Herutu born anew?" She asked them, and saw the two cock their head in dismay.

Vidas said, "We are Irfat, and the blood of Raelralataen and of Hak flows in our veins. We have taken the bond and hear our horse's heart beat like a drum. We hear the voice of the wind as we ride and know Hak has chosen us as his special people. Horghast and Herutu are reborn in all of us."

"And so it is," Kifu said to them, and laughed her bitter laugh.

"I speak the words so you will remember. I speak the words so you know your place in things. Horghast and Herutu were the first of Hak's children. Horghast and Herutu were the first fall before the children of Odir. You have been given the blessing of the horsebond. You are of the blood of the god. As Horghast died to save his brother, will you lay down your life for each Peshwah and Peshleh?"

"Aye," they said in unison, "We will bleed as the first bled. We will die as the first dies, in service to our brothers, in service to Hak."

"Go then brothers, and hunt upon the plains. Return to us with the scalp of an Afridhi, and you may call yourselves Irfat. Hika Ai!" Peshwah na-Kifu am-Irfat watched as the two stood and walked away from her. She wished them luck of the Hak.

She wished them safety.

Faith Among the Peshwah

Peshwah and Peshleh are one, crafted by Hak to make a perfect being. This rests at the center of Peshwah religion and their experience of the divine. Faith and belief to Peshwah are very primal and very simple. Where the gods of the Thonian Empire are often distant from their worshipers and are worshipped within Cathedrals, the Peshwah divinities are members of the family who share a fire at night and often enter into personal and close communication with their worshippers. Hadeen and Raelralataen have walked among the Peshwah and are ascended from the people. This intimacy defines the Peshwah religious experience.

The horse bond is sacred to the Peshwah. Some Peshwah live their entire lives wrapped in a relationship with their horses. Some Peshwah bond only once in their lives and let that connection set the tone for who and what they are as Peshwah. The memory of the contact is enough to carry them through their lives and into the next life. The Peshleh are not as long lived as the Peshwah, and life is hard for them in different ways than it is for the Peshwah. Some tribes and individual Peshwah cannot abide the loss of more than one horse in their lives. Others see the bond as their duty and just as winter comes each year, so must the death of the bonded horse. The constant for all is the bond.

The horses of the Peshwah live about ten to twelve years on average, although examples of horses that have lived 30 or even 40 years can be found in each tribe. In general, however, the horses live as brutal and short a life as their bonded riders. Life on the High Hak is hard for them, and the long war against the great enemy unrelenting.

Peshwah religion is the current in the river of Peshwah life. The war with the Afridhi has tainted that water and the religion of the Peshwah moves them forward in the day to day struggle with the Afridhi and with Zugzul. Peshwah

cultural identity is defined by the struggle with Zugzul, and the ambition of all the Peshwah is to destroy the great enemy and reclaim the Hak.

Prophecy

"Prophet" is a powerful word among the Peshwah. They have a potent spoken tradition and many of their entertainments and traditions are built around recitations of legend, story, of sacred texts, the most sacred of which is prophecy. The Peshwah gods often speak directly to the individual. Some contacted by the divine are selected to be the voice of the god or gods in question and become a prophet, or kijiwah. The kijiwah are sacred to the Peshwah. Once each generation, a kijiwah will arise from among the people and speak of the god's will and what is possible. Particularly remarkable and auspicious events are often foreshadowed by the genesis of multiple prophets within a generation.

Yoosef's birth was marked by the birth of the twelve, one from each tribe. Their bloody sacrifice at the hands of the Cult of Calelrin marked the birth of that god. Peshwah prophecies have given the people guidance as they have moved forward though the ages and have shown them what lies before them and what adaptations they must make to endure.

The Role of the Hommett

The Hommett of each tribe are a close knit group of spiritual advisors for the people. Part teacher, part historian, and part priest, the special relationship of the Hommett to the people is part of what makes Peshwah spirituality very different from that of the rest of the north. The religious leaders of the Peshwah are not always clerics and druids. Often they are Wokan or adepts or elderkin and occasionally even bards. Among the Peshwah, the ability to tell a tale, solve a conflict, and interpret omen in a meaningful way, is what makes someone a Hommett. Sometimes there is one Hommett among a tribe. Sometimes there are many. This distinction really depends on the population of the tribe, the pressure that the population faces, as well as disposition of the people. In the hardest time, the most people emerge as Hommett.

The Peshwah are ruled by the leado. This individual earns their position by a combination of prowess of arms and effective political maneuvering. The Hommett counterbalance the leado's position and act as voice of the people as well as advisor to the rulers. The Peshwah value prowess in arms. They also value wise counsel. The Hommett becomes the place were these individuals can most support their culture and also protect the people from the excesses of a bad leado.

Hommett are chosen by other Hommett or by the people of the tribe. It is most common for the Hommett to embark on a vision quest across the Hak in search of personal knowledge and perhaps also, knowledge of use to the people. The culmination of each Hommett's vision quest is a trip to the Zah, and a consultation with the mystics of the Besh am-Mino. These individuals help the would-be Hommett interpret his or her vision quest, and determine if a journey into the land of dream and spirit is warranted. If it is, then the Peshwah in question enters the Tower of Salt, the gateway into the land of the gods and also the grave of the first horse.

Not all return from the Tower of Salt. Of those who do, not all still want to walk the path of the Hommett. Those who still seek the title and all that goes with it will return home to petition the current Hommett for a place among them. Those who are rejected, usually leave their tribe and wander the land. Many Peshwah found outside of Peshwah lands in the north were at one time on the path of the Hommett.

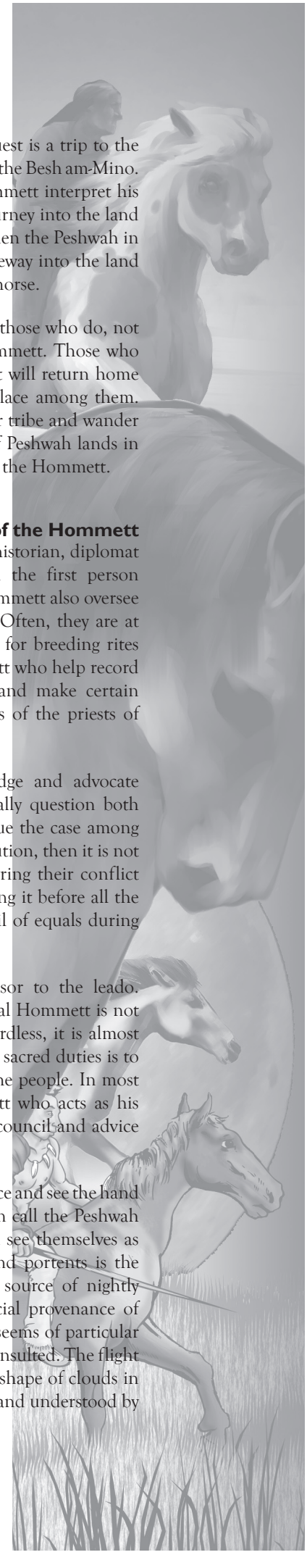
Social Duties of the Hommett

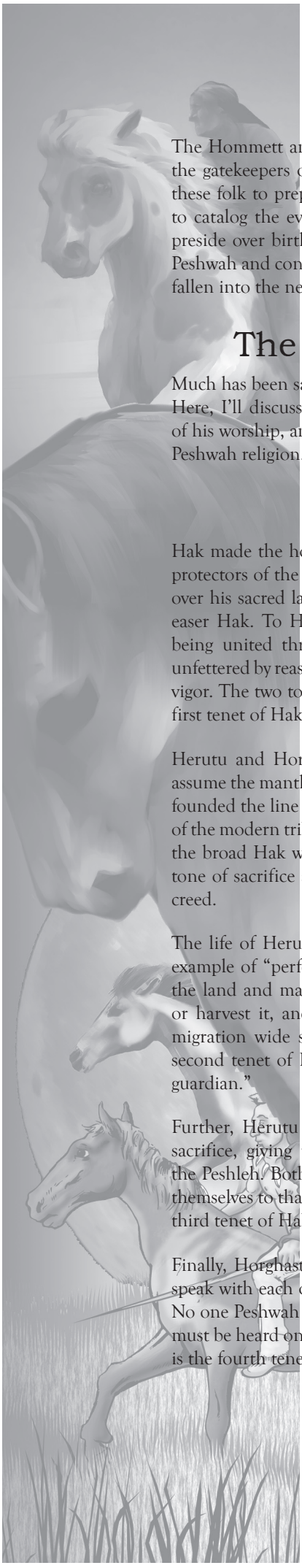
Hommett are combination matchmaker, historian, diplomat and soothsayer. The Hommett is often the first person involved in the resolution of disputes. Hommett also oversee the ceremony of marriage in every tribe. Often, they are at the center of negotiations for dowry and for breeding rites between herds of horses. It is the Hommett who help record the births and deaths of the Peshwah and make certain this information makes it into the hands of the priests of Raelralataen.

Hommett often act as combination judge and advocate during disputes. The Hommett will usually question both sides at length and then withdraw to argue the case among themselves. If they cannot come to a resolution, then it is not uncommon for the Hommett to either bring their conflict before their tribe's leado or to wait to bring it before all the Hommett of all the tribes and the council of equals during the Camberi.

The Hommett are often the chief advisor to the leado. Sometimes the advice offered by individual Hommett is not welcomed by the leado in question. Regardless, it is almost always given. One of the Hommett's most sacred duties is to advise the leado and act as advocate for the people. In most tribes, the leado will select one Hommett who acts as his primary councilor. That Hommett seeks council and advice from among his or her peers.

The Peshwah see the world as a mystical place and see the hand of their gods in all things. Outsiders often call the Peshwah superstitious as a result, but the Peshwah see themselves as prudent. The interpretation of omens and portents is the provenance of all the Peshwah and the source of nightly chatter around many fires. It is the special provenance of the Hommett, however, and when a sign seems of particular import, it is the Hommett who are often consulted. The flight of birds, the way the grass blows, and the shape of clouds in the sky, all of these things are interpreted and understood by the Hommett.





The Hommett and in particular, priests of Raelralataen are the gatekeepers of the afterlife for the Peshwah. It is up to these folk to prepare the bodies of the fallen for burial and to catalog the events of the life of the Peshwah. Hommett preside over birth and death, sanctifying the arrival of new Peshwah and consecrating their names, as well as guiding the fallen into the next life.

The Peshwah Pantheon

Much has been said in other places about the Peshwah gods. Here, I'll discuss the history of each god, as well as habits of his worship, and the dominant mythologies that structure Peshwah religion. Peshwah religion is intimate and personal.

Hak

Hak made the horse, and then men to be companions and protectors of the horse. He also gave the Peshwah dominion over his sacred lands, the High Hak, Plains of Hak and the easer Hak. To Hak, the Peshwah and the Peshleh are one being united through the horsebond. Horses are passion unfettered by reason. Men are cold though without emotional vigor. The two together are Hak's finest creation. This is the first tenet of Hak, Horse and Man make a perfect soul.

Herutu and Horghast were twin brothers and the first to assume the mantle of leadership among the Peshwah. Herutu founded the line of the Qulaam. Horghast was at the genesis of the modern tribes and set the Peshwah to wandering across the broad Hak with their god. Both of the brothers set the tone of sacrifice and vigilance that is at the center of Hak's creed.

The life of Herutu and Horghast is often referenced as an example of "perfect duty." These Peshwah were stewards of the land and made certain the Peshwah did not over hunt or harvest it, and that the Peshwah kept their patterns of migration wide so as not to burden the land. This is the second tenet of Hak, "Be of the land, be its shepherd and guardian."

Further, Herutu and Horghast both died deaths of noble sacrifice, giving themselves to protect other Peshwah and the Peshleh. Both were slain by sons of Odir, and both gave themselves to that death so that others might live. That is the third tenet of Hak, "To bleed for another is to bleed for all."

Finally, Horghast and Herutu always had time to hear and speak with each of the people and to treat each as an equal. No one Peshwah is greater than any other and each Peshwah must be heard on an issue if they have something to say. That is the fourth tenet of Hak, "All are equal in Hak's eyes."

The Plains of Hak

These are the sacred lands of the Peshwah. The Peshwah are under instruction from their god to be stewards of the land and effective caretakers. The loss of the Plains of Hak to the Afridhi is a harsh blow to the Peshwah, especially to Hak's followers and priests. They fail in their duty each day the land is held by the enemy. In many ways, the land *is* the god.

Hak only has one Hommett in each tribe devoted to him. Usually a priest, this individual shares the informal governance with the other Hommett. Hak wants each voice to be heard around the campfire and not just his own, and so his priests limit their influence among the people.

Hak's daily worship involves following his tenets. Hak's priests oversee daily life and daily ritual. Hs followers speak to him often each day, asking guidance and for strength. No part of Peshwah life goes by without his involvement.

Hak's Prophecies

Hak does not speak directly in prophecy the way his sons do. Hak believes in the power of portent and sign and encourages his people to pay attention to what the land speaks to them.

Hadeen

Hadeen's death at the hands of the Cult of Calelrin is the historical benchmark for all Peshwah. It is a scar across the face of the people and they bear his loss with a mixture of shame and grief. To the Peshwah, victory over the Afridhi was within their grasp. Corruption within their number squandered it. Their current state of degradation and shame is their fault and responsibility. The assassins were from within the Adiel clan, and they work vigorously to overcome that taint. The Somhak were charged with protecting Hadeen and failed—this is brought up in many political debates. The Irfat continue to bear the brunt of the Afridhi assault, and resent the loss of the Archer as it also caused Raelralataen to quit the field.

With Hadeen's death most of his active worshippers shifted their focus to the other three gods, with Hak and Yoosef absorbing most of the faithful. A few of the faithful continue on without support of the god. Some of Hadeen's worshippers have devoted themselves to rooting out every member of the Cult of Calelrin, spending their lives expunging the shame of Hadeen's murder from the Peshwah through the fanatical pursuit and elimination of each Deceiver. They hide their purpose and identities from most as Calelrin's worshippers are quick to murder any they suspect hunt them.

The Afridhi fear Hadeen. Their holy texts identify this god as the one who will destroy Zugzul's earthly power and crush the might of their empire. To that end they have savaged the Peshwah, in particular the Briela and Irfat, who they also identify as a profound hazard.

The Bow of Hadeen

This artifact was lost to the Peshwah early in their history through the actions of a traitorous Briela leado. When Hadeen and Raelralataen returned, the Bow passed back into the hands of the people. Peshwah legend states that while Hadeen's bow and arrows are in the possession of the Peshwah, they cannot be defeated in battle. This has born true so far.

The Briela and a select few among the Somhak seek the Bow each year. Many a Briela haksoja has just disappeared while seeking the Bow, and many Somhak rangers have found themselves on a path that suddenly turned cold and deadly.

In the hands of Hadeen, or of his avatar, the Bow is a deadly weapon. The arrows force those struck to confront their sins, and will often slay those struck outright. In game terms, assume arrows fired from the bow function both as slaying and as bane for their target. Individual arrows possess other powers as well.

The Archer's Prophecy

The prophecies of Hadeen or the prophecies of hadasuja (truth of the Great Archer) are a series of legends and stories penned directly by Hadeen or by people he touched with the gift of vision. Hadeen's prophecies address the coming of the great enemy and the near destruction of the people at the hands of the children of fire. Most Peshwah take this to mean the Afridhi and the worshippers of Zugzul. The prophecies reference the return of the Bow of Hadeen and the unification of the twelve tribes under one war banner. The Briela feature prominently in this prophetic tradition and it is to them the salvation of the people is ultimately ascribed.

Much debate has ensued among the Peshwah as to the meaning of the last scroll of the prophecies. Hadeen's last great prophet, Peshwah na-Isu am-Sufz claimed the people would eventually have to pass through a ring of black rock and into a new world, surrendering their names and taking a new identity in a pace beyond the reach the lord of fire. Some hold this describes the process of passing into the next life. Others say this describes a great migration. No definitive interpretation has been made.

Raelralataen

Raelralataen is the founder of the Irfat tribe and the first leado of the people. When the Peshwah grew too numerous to travel in one band, it was Raelralataen who organized the people into the first tribes and set them on their annual wanderings. Raelralataen codified the first laws of the people and, with the Somhak's skill at negotiation, defined the tribal boundaries that have endured to this day. If Hak is the doting grandfather of the Peshwah, Raelralataen is the stern father. He is both lawgiver and guardian.

Priests of Raelralataen are concerned with the ordered resolution of conflict and the creation of rules to govern Peshwah society. Dispute among the followers of Raelralataen almost always centers on interpretations of tradition and the old ways. Some among the followers of the Law Keeper see it as their duty to protect what was. This is often the interpretation favored by the Irfat and the Bortai. Some see it as their duty to develop adaptive rules for change that will help guide the Peshwah along an ever changing path. This is the position advocated by the Faleem and the priests of their city, High Tenlish.

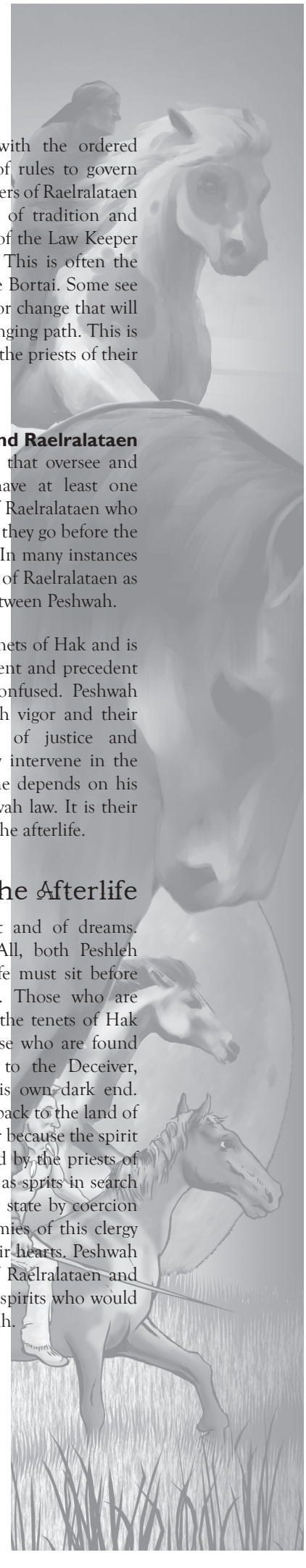
Peshwah Law and Raelralataen

The priests of Raelralataen are the ones that oversee and resolve internal conflict. Most tribes have at least one Hommett that is a worshipper or clergy of Raelralataen who oversees disputes and resolves most before they go before the leado or seeks resolution at the Camberi. In many instances the Hommett will consult with the priests of Raelralataen as they resolve, dispute, or seek an answer between Peshwah.

The Peshwah law code is based on the Tenets of Hak and is enmeshed in an aural tradition of argument and precedent that would make a Thonian barrister confused. Peshwah study history, religion and elocution with vigor and their debates are sophisticated explorations of justice and precedent. Raelralataen does not directly intervene in the resolution of Peshwah conflict. Rather, he depends on his priests and followers to justly enact Peshwah law. It is their duty. Raelralataen saves his judgment for the afterlife.

The Afterlife

Hak's halls reside in the land of spirit and of dreams. Raelralataen is guardian of the dead. All, both Peshleh and Peshwah, who pass into the next life must sit before Raelralataen's fire and justify their life. Those who are found to have lived service according to the tenets of Hak are given passage into the next life. Those who are found wanting are cast out and surrendered to the Deceiver, Calelrin, who harvests their souls for his own dark end. Sometimes, Raelralataen will send a sprit back to the land of the living to resolve unfinished business or because the spirit is not ready to rest. Undead are not hated by the priests of Raelralataen. Rather they are understood as sprits in search of rest. Undead that are brought to their state by coercion or torment, however, are the special enemies of this clergy and they seek them out with wrath in their hearts. Peshwah elderkin are often devout worshippers of Raelralataen and surround themselves with those Peshwah spirits who would fight on against the enemies of the Peshwah.



The Tampul am-Raelralataen and Naktok

These two locales exist at opposite ends of understanding. Both are seen by the Peshwah as legitimate interpreters of Hak's will. However, each has a slightly different focus.

The warrior priests of the Tampul am-Raelralataen support and shelter a monastery of lehcus from all the tribes. These individuals are trained as monks and have forsaken their clan to support the Tampul and also the Peshwah. They live in true harmony with the tenets of Hak. The priesthood here keeps records of the births and death of each man and horse and acts as a repository and library for the aural traditions of the Peshwah. The Faleem have mastered the craft of making papyrus and other papers and this technological shift is slowly changing Peshwah culture. It is the priesthood of Raelralataen who have begun to oversee written contracts and develop a type of case law.

In Naktok, or the Barrow Gate, the Irfat Priests of Raelralataen act as guardians of the dead and teachers of the young. Those Irfat that are not fostered to another clan are raised in the mountain pass by the priests of the dead. These priests are focused on the traditional role of Raelralataen as caretaker of the dead. They are also the individuals who decide if an individual warrants internment in the crypt of the horse lords.

The Lawgiver's Prophecy

Raelralataen's prophecies have all dealt with the hunt for the Cult of Calelrin and betrayal by rogue Peshwah. Grimjaws is cryptic in what he shares with the people. He points the way, It is up to the interpreter to find the path.



Yoosef

The worship of Yoosef is the worship of change and adaptation. Yoosef sprang from the blood of the wisest fallen prophets of the tribes. Calelrin had set the stage for the elimination of white magic from the plains of Hak. His ritual was thwarted, however, by followers of Hadeen, and Hak was able to take the blood magic that was wrought in the murder and bring forth Yoosef, the youngest of the Peshwah gods.

Yoosef is a being of white magic and change. Wokan and sorcerers are seen by his followers as connected in a primal and pure way with Yoosef and have the patronage and support of all his worshippers. All followers of Yoosef are known as prophets and all of his worshippers have an equal chance of being contacted by their god and gifted with a vision.

Yoosef's clergy are often monks, druids or clerics, but rangers and even adepts have often achieved position of authority within Yoosef's faith. Yoosef's faith is not organized with the same vigor as Raelralataen's or even Hak's and is more akin to a brotherhood of shared beliefs. All are truly equal in the eyes of Yoosef and anyone may act as his representative.

The Tower of Salt is a sacred place within the lands of the Peshwah. When Yoosef was given to the people, it was here he took his first step. The Tower of Salt is sacred because it is the geographic center of the High Hak. It is also where the bones of the first horse were interred. The pilgrimage to the Tower has special meaning to all Peshwah and is the spiritual center of all Peshwah life and Yoosef is seen as its caretaker.

Yoosef's patronage of white magic and of innate spell casters like sorcerers and wokan has brought several of the Peshwah into direct conflict with the Wizard's Cabal on more than one occasion. Yoosef teaches tolerance and acceptance of all and is especially concerned with practitioners of magic.

Yoosef's faith focuses on making certain the Peshwah live in unity upon the land and also that they are as adaptive as the land is to change. Yoosef is especially concerned with crafts and the development and adaptation of technology. Yoosef is venerated by the farmers and craftsmen among the Peshwah.

Prophecy of Yoosef

Yoosef's prophecy is focused on change and the unity of the north. There are a group of his prophets who insist that the children of Odir must eventually be brought into the horse bond and this is Hak's plan. Yoosef's prophecy also features the inclusion of more and more of northerners into the tribes through adoption. He also predicts life after the destruction of Zugzul. Yoosef's prophecy comes in the form of vivid dreams.

Calelrin

Calelrin was not always the enemy of the Peshwah and Hak. He was Hak's first and favored son. He was present when the first horses and Peshwah were made, was privy to his Father's plans. Calelrin was beloved of Hak, and Hak indulged his every whim, letting Calelrin run unchecked and uncontrolled across the Hak and in the lands of men. This was the undoing of them both, as Calelrin grew arrogant and self-absorbed and Hak's love was taken for granted and assumed and not understood as the gift that it was.

Calelrin was consumed by jealousy over the first of men. They become his father's haksoja and the focus of his affection. This was different from the creation of the Peshleh, who were his compatriots and companions. The Peshwah were made in his image. Calelrin hated them, as he saw in them competition for his father's love, and his fathers kingdom, which Calelrin though must someday be his. Calelrin's fall from grace sprang from his attempt to destroy the Peshwah.

Calelrin's Fall

Horghast and Herutu and the tribe of the firsts were grazing on the banks of the Root River Calelrin had conspired against them with the Children of Odir and led them to the place where they might find the perfect horses they lusted after and also where they might find the Peshwah. Horghast sacrificed himself so that his brother Herutu and the others might live.

When Hak found out about this, he questioned Calelrin as to his whereabouts. Calelrin's deceptions failed against Hak and Hak saw clearly that Calelrin moved against the people. Hak could not bring himself to slay his first son and cast him out. He banished him from his halls and broke his horse bond, severing him from the Peshleh and rendering him lehcus.

Calelrin fled his father's halls and eventually settled in the domain of the Hells, consort to devils.

The Cult of Calelrin

The followers work to overthrow Hak and the other Peshwah gods so that their god might rule and remake the Hak in his and their image. Followers of Calelrin believe that Hak is weak and the Peshwah are also. If the Peshwah had engaged in wars of conquest, the Afridhi would have been hunted to extinction long before they were threats. The same is true of the Thonians to the south and their thralls to the north.

The cult works in secret and its normal unit is a parody of the normal Haksoja. Instead of being formed by a band of friends and kinsmen who travel together in defense of the people, the haksoja of Calelrin of groups of people devoted to their own advancement and personal gain. They work together out of a desire for power and mutual advancement.



The Cult has seduced many a Peshwah with promises of an easy path to power. Calelrin showers each of his worshippers with his attention, helping them find others of a like mind and also using visions and omens to help them select targets. There is no higher form of worship than the destruction of another, be that through their murder, or though the destruction of their reputation. Banished Peshwah are easy prey for Calelrin and in many ways defamation is a finer trap that murder.

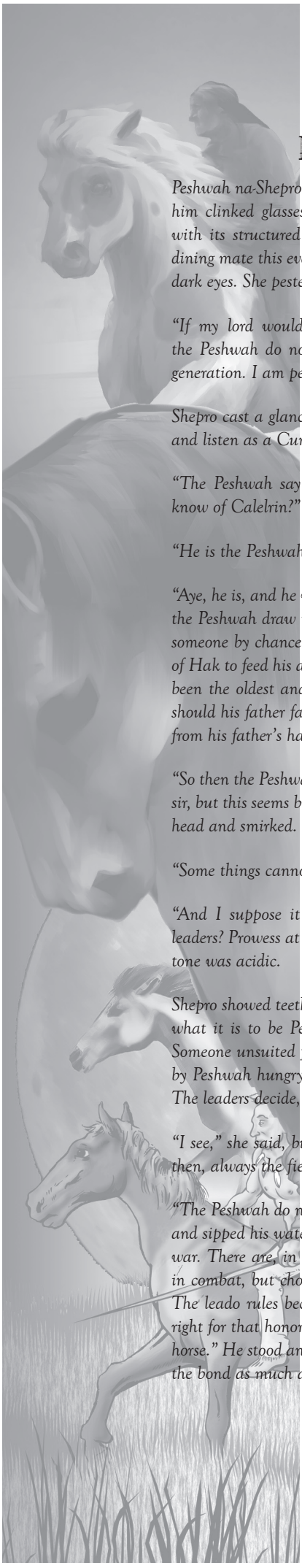
The Cut has several "Saints" who are cultists who committed particularly notable murders or destructions of character. Often, cells are formed around these saints and passed through bloodlines. Many of Calelrin's cults interbreed with and enter into alliance with shape shifters, in particular, doppelgangers. Many Peshwah believe that these are the souls of fallen Peshwah seduced by Calelrin, and then returned to this world to work his evil.

Calelrin actively cultivates relationships with the enemies of the people and of Hak. Calelrin has aided the Afridhi, the Egg, and the Thonian Empire at times and his influence has spread beyond the Peshwah and into the cities of the north. Calelrin would remake the world in his image. The strong should rule. The weak should serve.

Prophecy and Calelrin

Calelrin uses the mystic bent of the Peshwah against them and will often attempt to twist the meaning of prophetic texts with false and misleading interpretations. Calelrin has also actively worked throughout the ages to offer an alternate version of great historic and mythic events, attempting to mislead and distract the Peshwah from their great journey.

Calelrin uses vision and omen to direct his agents where he needs them. Sometimes he uses it to mislead and seduce, as deception is his favorite art. His communication is manipulative is concerned with achieving his own ends.



First Among Equals

Peshwah na-Shepro rubbed the scar on his jaw and smirked. Around him clinked glasses and goblets and Uther's feast moved forward with its structured pace. Andahar had saddled him with an odd dining mate this evening and the young noble looked at him through dark eyes. She pestered with a thousand questions.

"If my lord would please explain, is it true that the leaders of the Peshwah do not pass the mantle of power from generation to generation. I am perplexed by this. How is order kept?"

Shepro cast a glance down the table and saw his liege lean forward and listen as a Cumasti spoke something close and just for his ear.

"The Peshwah say that deeds make the ruler, not blood. Do you know of Calelrin?" Shepro asked and regarded the young woman.

"He is the Peshwah devil god of lies?" she said and met his gaze.

"Aye, he is, and he was Hak's first and favored son. From his fall, do the Peshwah draw instruction. It is folly for the leadership to fall to someone by chance. Calelrin would have squandered all the realms of Hak to feed his ambition and power. In your world he would have been the oldest and the one who would assume his father's throne should his father fall. Some say it was this ambition that drove him from his father's halls."

"So then the Peshwah settle who leads with steel and murder. Pardon sir, but this seems brutal and barbaric." The young woman tilted her head and smirked.

"Some things cannot be said with words," Shepro answered.

"And I suppose it is always, the brightest and best who become leaders? Prowess at arms ALWAYS means intellect, does it not?" her tone was acidic.

Shepro showed teeth in a humorless smile, "The good lady disregards what it is to be Peshwah. The right to challenge must be earned. Someone unsuited for the task would find himself beset on all sides by Peshwah hungry for his blood. The people choose who may lead. The leaders decide, steel to steel who is the better".

"I see," she said, but it was clear to him, she did not. "Is the leado then, always the fiercest warrior?"

"The Peshwah do not live a sheltered life behind high walls," he said and sipped his water. "Any who lead the Peshwah must be skilled in war. There are, in every tribe, Peshwah who could beat their leado in combat, but chose not to confront him out of respect, or of fear. The leado rules because he can, and has shown he has the will to right for that honor. You will excuse me," he said. "I must see to my horse." He stood and let her chew on that, certain she misunderstood the bond as much as she misunderstood the leado.

Governance and the Peshwah

All Peshwah have opinions, and all Peshwah have the right to voice those opinions. This makes governance challenging at times. Peshwah are combative, politically engaged, and ready to draw blood if needed to make their point. Peshwah society and politics reflect this reality and disposition. The process of ruler ship, and the selection of rulers, reflects this, also.

In each tribe, someone must bring the disparate voices and opinions that are voiced every day into focus and give direction to the tribe as a whole. Someone must help organize the tribe and make certain its resources are equally and fairly shared. Someone must act as war leader and formalize strategy and organize the independent haksoja of the Peshwah into units capable of fighting in tandem. The leado is the individual in each tribe who accepts this responsibility.

A leado governs because he has earned the moral authority to do so and because he has demonstrated through right of arms that he has the combat prowess to lead the people in battle. Leado is never an inherited position, although sometimes leadership will flow from generation to generation within a family. Leado is earned and earned through combat. The nobles of the north find this troubling.

Becoming Leado

A Peshwah cannot merely assault the current leado, defeat him in combat, and then take his title. A Peshwah seeking the right to challenge must sometimes spend years planning the time to challenge and seeking the political support necessary to make a challenge. A leado must then petition the Hommett of his or her tribe and have his challenged sponsored by one of their number. All leado must also have demonstrated the ability to bond with a horse.

A Peshwah who aspires to leadership must marry, and the alliance he or she chooses will affect his or her ability to gain support within the tribe. Since the devastation of the great war, fertility and the ability to father or bear children has also been valued in a leado, not because this produces heirs, but more because it shows a commitment to the next generation and the return of the people.

Effectively leading a haksoja is also necessary for a would-be leado. Many leado demonstrate their ability to lead, to move upon the land, and to lead a small group in combat while they act as leader of a haksoja. It is in here that one learns how to influence people, shape their opinion and develop actionable plans. Peshwah have a great love of adventure and their aural traditions are centered on tales of heroic journey. Each Peshwah leado learns the value of a song or poem immortalizing their deeds early in their career.

The Contest for Leado

Most challenges are resolved during the Camberi, although it is not uncommon in times of crisis for the contest to be resolved at the time of, or soon after challenge. Some challenges are to the death and bloody affairs between political rivals who usually represent ideological opposites within the Peshwah. Some end without bloodshed as the mantle of leadership passes from one leado to the next. This is most common when an old and venerated leado chooses to lay down his head dress and recognize a new leader. Sometimes, the duel is not to the death, but rather until one or the other yields or until the other is beaten into unconsciousness. The terms of each challenge are negotiated ahead of time, with the current leado usually setting terms, under the advisement of the Hommett.

If not mortal in nature, loss of a challenge usually makes it impossible to ever attempt the position of leado again. There is a substantial loss of influence and face when a challenger is defeated in combat. Consequently, all who supported the challenger lose influence in the process of defeat and will often leave that cause. Regardless of the life or death of the challenger, his clan must pay the tribute to the winner assessed by the Hommett. This can often cripple the challenger and his family.

Most Peshwah who are defeated willingly submit to the victor. Defeat is often seen as Hak's will and understood as an affirmation by the god of the cause of the victor.

The contest itself is usually held in a depression in the plains, bowl shapes being ideal. A circle one hundred feet across is drawn by the proctor of the duel, who is usually the senior most Hommett or priest or follower of Raelralataen of the tribe in question.

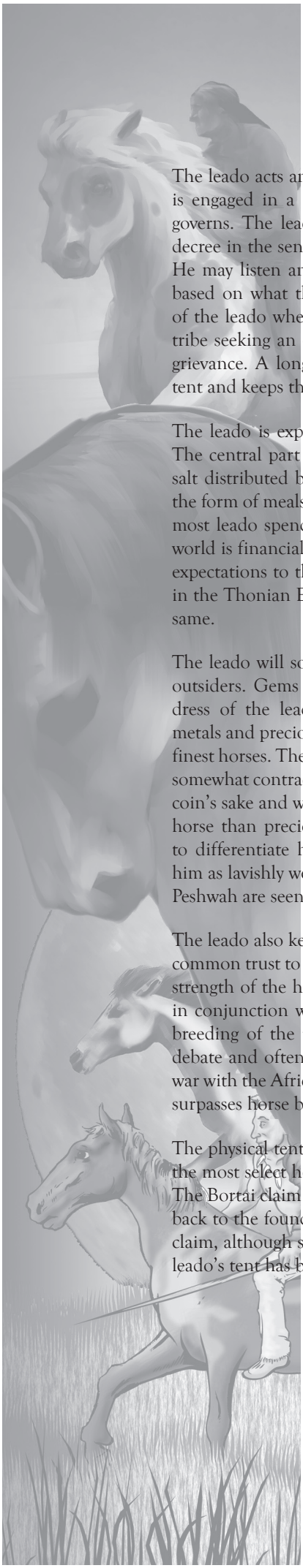
Caru Shia

Blood Law governs all rights of challenge. Most outsiders know about the challenges between leado but grossly misunderstand the process and how it affects all of the people. However, Peshwah all have the right to challenge each other over political disagreements, rights of pasturage, inheritance or over possession of goods or horses. The current Sirk has forbid lethal combat among Peshwah, as each individual Peshwah warrior is a precious commodity to the people.

Arbitration of disputes between the individual Peshwah is a large part of the leado's duties. A Peshwah who strikes another in anger is guilty of a crime. A Peshwah who convinces the Hommett that trial by combat is the only resolution, and who gets the leado to agree, is venerated in his victory.

Different leado have different approaches to this and the more traditional tribes are more likely to encourage trial by combat. Among the Faleem and the Peshneath, trial by combat has become a true rarity and most disputes are resolved by debate and not by steel. Among Peshwah, duels are either proctored by worshippers of Raelralataen or by a Peshwah who has been in an honor duel and conducted himself honorably. Challenges issued between the tribes can only occur when blessed by the Sirk. The petition for challenge must be brought to the Sirk by both the leado of the challenging tribe and also the Hommett of the tribe. The current Sirk favors Peshwah na-Kurell, master of the monks of the temple of Raelralataen as his proctor.





Duties of the Leado

The leado acts and leads by managing consensus. The leado is engaged in a constant conversation with the people he governs. The leado is the first among equals. He may not decree in the sense that the nobles of the north may decree. He may listen and then formulate the policy of his people based on what they agree to. Not a day passes in the tent of the leado where it is not visited by some member of the tribe seeking an opportunity to express an opinion or air a grievance. A long serving leado knows the secrets of every tent and keeps them well.

The leado is expected to share his wealth with the people. The central part of this is the equitable distribution of the salt distributed by the Zah to the 12 tribes. This also takes the form of meals and lavish feasts. A large part of the reason most leado spend a part of their youth traveling across the world is financial necessity. Many a Peshwah has fulfilled his expectations to the people with coin earned as a mercenary in the Thonian Empire or with gold plate seized raiding the same.

The leado will sometimes appear lavish and ostentatious to outsiders. Gems and jewelry are easily worn and the head dress of the leado is a combination of leather, feathers, metals and precious stones that is often worth as much as his finest horses. These displays are statements of wealth, and are somewhat contradictory. Most Peshwah do not value coin for coin's sake and would rather have well made spear and a fast horse than precious metal. However, the leado is expected to differentiate himself from the Peshwah, and to present him as lavishly wealthy. Such displays of wealth among other Peshwah are seen as ostentatious.

The leado also keeps the most select horses from the tribe in common trust to preserve their characteristics and add to the strength of the herd. The leado and the Hommett, working in conjunction with the other elders of the tribe, plan the breeding of the tribe's horses. This is the source of much debate and often the central issue around winter fires. The war with the Afridhi is the only other topic of discussion that surpasses horse breeding.

The physical tent of the leado, as well as his head dress, and the most select horses of the tribe, pass from leado to leado. The Bortai claim that the tent their Sirk lives in can be dated back to the founding of the tribe. No other tribes make this claim, although some will tell you it certainly smells like the leado's tent has been around that long.

The Sirk am-Peshwah

This Sirk is the leader of the people and holds a tenuous position. His authority stems from his acceptance by his fellow leado as well as recognition by the Hommett of all the tribes. Throughout the history of the Peshwah, it has been the Somhak or the Irfat who have most commonly been Sirk. The Briela, Faleem and Bortai have also each acted as leaders.

In most instances, the position of Sirk is assigned by vote during a Camberi. Each of the leado of the tribes drops the thigh bone of a horse etched with a symbol of the tribe they choose into a horsehide bag held by the Hommett of the Somhak. The vote is secret. Many years, this is a ritual. Some years, it is furious debate. Sometimes it is an open and armed conflict between those that would lead.

Duels for the position of Sirk are rare, but not unheard of, and usually occur mid-year when several of the tribes feel that the course the Sirk has chosen is one a poor one. Sirk na-Jota, the current Sirk, is Irfat, and has held his position since the fall of Hadeen. The old Sirk, Peshwah na-Ciru am-Somhak, fell with Hadeen the night he died. Jota formed consensus and assumed the role of Sirk by focusing blame for the loss of the god on the Somhak. This has irreparably damaged the relationship among the leaders of those tribes.

Leadership from the Sirk flows from his influence and moral authority. Sirk na-Jota leads because the story he tells the people is accepted and understood. He also leads because he has sculpted an effective consensus. At the center of the current Peshwah political reality is this understanding.

The Afridhi are the great enemy of several different prophecies. The Afridhi cannot be defeated through direct confrontation. That opportunity was squandered when Hadeen was slain and Raelralataen left the people. It is the responsibility of the Irfat and the Peshwah to protect Hak's sacred lands, and strike against the Afridhi whenever possible. Victory will come in the time and manner that Hak decrees. It is the duty of each Peshwah to support the war, grow their population, and guard closely all of their resources.

The Sirk has spent the last twenty years injecting this into the political dialog of the people. He tells whoever asks him that this clarity of vision and understanding of the world is the gift of Raelralataen. To a certain extent, this is true, as he has been given visions and signs that have guided him on his path. Jota has been accepted as Sirk and leads because he has placed himself at the center of the process of the long war, and has brought the people to an understanding of what must be done to survive.

Jota's central strategy has been making it too costly and dangerous for the Afridhi to mass and strike and eliminate them. He has been told by Peshwah na-Shepro that a strike against the Peshwah would cause Blackmoor to surge across the border into Ten. The people of Ten make occupation costly and have limited the Afridhi's ability to strike at them. Jota does all he can to keep the Afridhi off balance and unable to focus their might on the Peshwah.

His success in leadership stems from this.

The Sirk cannot issue decrees. Each tribe makes its own decisions and the leado of each tribe acts as administrators of those decisions. As a result, Jota gets what he needs by intimidation, by confrontation, by subtle threat, and most importantly, by defining every disagreement on his terms. To deny the Sirk support is one thing, to deny all the Peshwah support that is critical to them is another. Jota, like any good Sirk, governs effectively because he can define the political conflict on his terms and force agreement based on those terms.

The Sirk has very little direct power. He has authority over conflicts between clans. He has authority over the haksoja of the Peshwah when they mass for battle. He has direct authority over the coordinated defense of the peoples. Everything else he effects through influence.

The Camberi

This annual festival is important on many levels. It is the place where marriages are made and alliances between the tribes are formed at the familial level. It is a hub of inter clan trade and commerce. It is also a place where the political processes of Peshwah are most evident.

At the center of Sul Peshwah and the Camberi, is the Ja Ishi, or Place of Fate. It is a combination forum and court. Here the Peshwah bring grievances that are inter-tribal or beyond the wisdom of just one tribe. Issues involving outsiders and conflict with the north are discussed here also, with advice and involvement of the Somhak Hommett. Much of what happens every day of the Camberi is administration between tribes and resolution of those conflicts.

More importantly, however, the Camberi is the place where the leado and the Sirk work together with their elders and the Hommett to forge agreed upon policy regarding the coming year. Embassy to the north, evaluations of the export of horses and armor, and strategic conflict with the Afridhi are the major points of conflict. Occasionally, specific Peshwah are brought before the Sirk and the assembled leado for judgment. This process involves debate and hard discussion, and it is not unusual for Peshwah to have particularly articulate members of their clan speak for them. Likewise, the person bringing accusation against a specific Peshwah may identify another Peshwah to come and speak for them in making the case. When a charge is made by the Sirk, a leado, or the tribe, often a priest of Raelralataen is will speak for the tribe.

Those northerners who have seen this process comment that it is as sophisticated as any legal debate brought before the King or conducted at the University of Blackmoor. The Peshwah law code is still largely unwritten. Issues of precedent are drawn from epic tales, decisions that have been made, and holy texts.

Ja Ishi

The ceiling of this building is a twenty-five foot dome. The space is some fifty feet wide and dug into the shape of a bowl over a central flat, floor, with a fire pit in the center. Directly above is a smoke hole. Seating rings the floor and the ground is covered in fresh and fragrant newly cut grass. Magical torches illuminate the space.

The tribes sit in a ring around the central space. The leado sits in the highest place in the area designated for his tribe. The leado's council, usually made of his haksoja and the Hommett of the tribe sit in rows below.

The eldest Hommett of the Somhak oversees the debate and the discussion and determines who has the right to speak at any given time by giving the Staff of the Speaker to those who would have their say. The person holding the Vilohom has the right to speak exclusively before the assembled Peshwah. Other Peshwah speak in turn, each passing the staff from one to the next as issues are debated. Occasionally, there is physical conflict over the staff, as one Peshwah will attempt to wrest the right to speak from the other. This is the exception, and not the rule.

The Ja Ishi is a sacred space among the Peshwah. Being such, it is a place where emotions run hot, words are spoken, and ideas are bantered back and forth with ferocity and zeal. Politics, and political decisions, are touched by the divine in this culture.

Chapter Three: The Tribes

The Peshwah have been organized into tribes for as long anyone can remember. When Hak first formed the Peshwah, they were as one. As the numbers of Peshwah increased, and as the Peshwah herds began to differentiate, the Peshwah broke into tribes. Clear origins have long since vanished, but there are alliances that exist to this day among the tribes that probably have their basis in the shrouded depths of time.

Speaking broadly, Peshwah politics are polarized around relationships to tradition and the way that those traditions are understood and venerated. Some of the Peshwah are conservative traditionalists and believe the old ways are the best ways and should be adhered to without question. To do otherwise is to step off the path Hak has ordained and is disrespectful to the ancestors. Others believe that just as the horse is improved from generation to generation, so are men, and that change is necessary, inevitable and welcome and it is the duty of each Peshwah to embrace changes and make them Peshwah. This debate is the central debate in Peshwah culture. Some tribes fall wholly in one court or the others. The Bortai are ardent traditionalists. The Faleem are likewise aggressive in their arguments for adaptability and change. The Zah and Somhak tread lightly in the center.

As a spectrum, the Peshwah tribes can be understood in this way (see graph).



Each and every tribe has members more or less aligned along the dominant ideology of their people. Within the tribes, individual clans may hold beliefs that diverge from their brethren. The politics within any given tribe are hardly monolithic. Families and clans within the structure of a Peshwah tribe that diverge from the core cluster of values may face none to total persecution within their tribe, depending on how committed their particular tribe is to its core ideal. A Faleem traditionalist would be the subject of quite a bit of scorn from his brethren, while that same cluster of values within the Somhak would be seen as a legitimate interpretation of Hak's will.

The Adiel

Population: 1400 adults. 820 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 5000 horses, 3000 grazers, 600 oxen, 800 goats.
Horses: Dappled gray, known for speed.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Bortai, Irfat, Leron, Zah. Current: Bortai, Irfat, Zah and Faleem.

Lands and History

The Adiel are a conservative clan, committed to the ways of Hak and the Hakleh, but at the same time tortured by the compromises forced upon them by the current situation. The Adiel have long been the most numerous of the Peshwah clans. The Adiel have always prided themselves on their devotion to the land, to their gods, and to the ways of their ancestors. However, since the tribes have been forced onto the High Hak, the Adiel have had to make some unpleasant compromises.

The traditional grazing land of the Adiel is from Colenso Station to Sul Peshwan. This relatively vast expanse of land is bordered on the north by the Salt Road and by the South by the Impie Road. The Adiel maintain the largest herds and also the largest population among the Peshwah and has had the hardest time keeping that population fed and maintaining their traditional way of life. The druids of the Adiel have been pushed to their limits making certain the pasturage of the Adiel has been sufficient. At times, the Adiel have negotiated pasturage with the Bortai and the Sufz on the eastern Hak. This has become more and more common in recent years as the High Hak has really begun to show strains from carrying such a large population.

Elements of the Adiel have begun farming grains and winter vegetables under the instruction and tutelage of the Faleem. This has led to some unusual cross family cross-tribal alliances as intermarriage has occurred between the two tribes for the first time in several generations. The Adiel are in the middle of a forced cultural transformation and it shows in the political strain they are under.

The semi-permanent township of Haken Dar (High Vantage) rose up at the center of their territory. Organized around a natural spring and an uplifted sheet of bedrock, Haken Dar started out as a natural and effective place for the Adiel to spend part of their cycle of migration. As the Plains of Hak were lost, Haken Dar became less a temporary and seasonable camp and more a full-blown town. About one-third of the

Adiel have chosen the life of farmer over the life of hunter-gatherer and have permanently settled around the town. What were once yurts and tents easily struck and moved have evolved into wood and sod houses that are permanent fixtures of the surrounding countryside. Unlike the Faleem, who have personal plots of land they are responsible for, the Adiel work communal plots of land, with one entire clan overseeing the production around Haken Dar.

Politics

The Adiel have long been allies of the Irfat and the Bortai and have a very strong relationship with the latter. Bortai and Adiel routinely intermarry. often forming war bands and raiding parties together. The Irfat prefer placing their sons and daughters among the Adiel, and that particular alliance is one of the oldest and most enduring among the Peshwah.

The Adiel find the Qulaam bizarre in the extreme and respect the tribe for the sacrifices they have made to do Hak's will, but have little interest in interaction with them. Likewise, the Ornidri, with their alliances and easy relationships with the exiled forces of Ten, make the Adiel uncomfortable. They are the most xenophobic of the twelve clans. The Adiel and the Somhak have severed their ties since the death of Hadeen. Blame and accusations between the two over who truly bears responsibility for Hadeen's death have driven an apparently irreconcilable wedge between the two groups. Several of the other tribes, particularly the Faleem and Peshneath, say this conflict is the direct work and wish of Calelrin and both groups would be better suited to lay down their ire.

The Adiel view the Zah as their spiritual guardians and are quick to marry their younger sons into the clan in service to the Zah matriarchs. While the Adiel do not bear the Sufz the same outright hostility they do the Somhak, they have never forgiven the tribe for the murder of the prophets.

The Adiel view the Briela with some reverence and see their willingness to taint themselves through long-term exposure to the sons of Odir as the ultimate form of sacrifice. The Adiel view the Peshneath as very brave, but very strange and although they respect the hunters of spiders their lifestyle is beyond their understanding.

leado Peshwah na-Cummot am-Adiel bri Veander rules the Adiel and has done so for the last fifteen years by striking a delicate balance between the necessity of feeding his people and the preservation of their identity. He knows that he is ultimately doomed if his people are unable to regain the Hak. Cummot knows that the balance he has made is in the process of disintegrating. The Adiel farmers have drifted farther and farther from their herder brothers. Many of the youngest among the Adiel have never known the open Hak and have never felt the weight of Afridhi hatred and oppression bear down on them. There are those among the Adiel who want nothing more than to be left alone with their horses and farms and stay on the High Hak. Likewise, there are just as many Adiel who despise the cramped congestion of their current lives and grazing lands and who ache for the broad expanse of the Plains of Hak.

Peshwah na-Hanso is known throughout the Adiel as an advocate for the old ways. His haksoja are a tightly knit group famous for their rides across the Plains of Hak and into the lands of the enemy. Hanso is also a famous duelist. Hanso is loud and vocal in his political opinions and routinely seeks out members of other clans, for non-lethal combat to resolve points of conflict he has with their ideology. While this process does not always silence debate or disagreement, it does change the discussion.

In opposition to Hanso are the council of Elders of Haken Dar. These women are widowed survivors of the war with the Afridhi. Led by Peshwah na-Erpia, these Adiel believe that the only answer for the tribes involves a long term commitment to the High Hak. To this way of thinking, the old ways are fading, and the Adiel must adapt to this change.

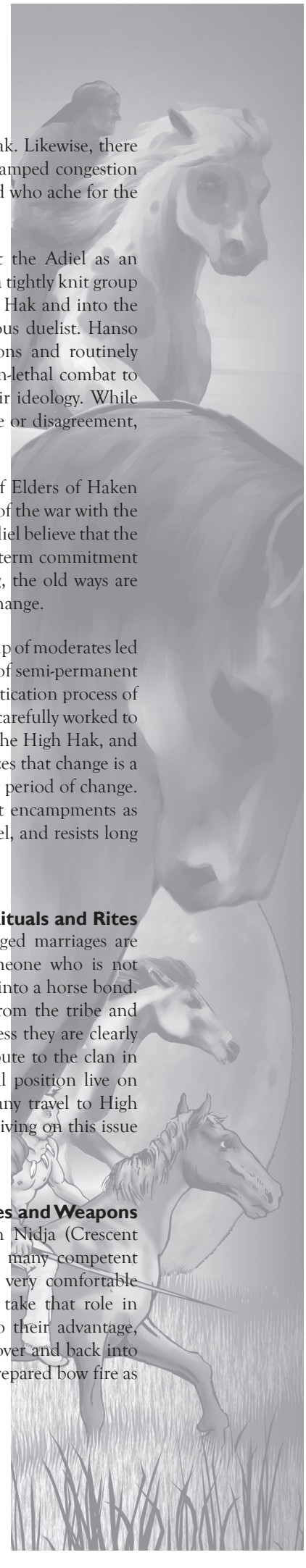
In between these two perspectives are a group of moderates led by Peshwah na-Inia, who has kept a series of semi-permanent camps and has, in effect, begun the domestication process of the grazer. He is a druid of Yoosef and has carefully worked to husband the land gently and assure both the High Hak, and the Peshwah survive this time. He recognizes that change is a natural process and that the Adiel are in a period of change. Simultaneously, he sees life in permanent encampments as counter to what makes the Adiel, the Adiel, and resists long term settlement on principle.

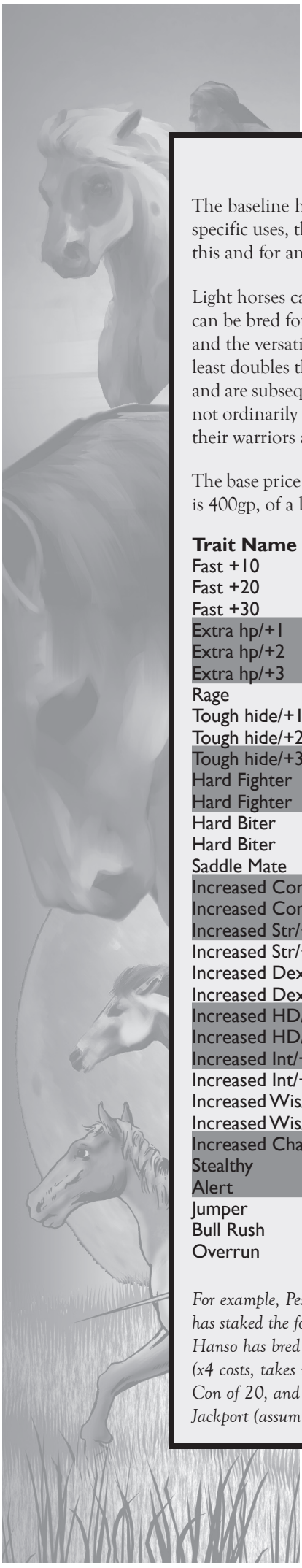
Rituals and Rites

The Adiel usually marry early and arranged marriages are preferred. The Adiel will not marry someone who is not able to pass through Pesh Briena-Leh and into a horse bond. Unbonded Peshwah are usually ejected from the tribe and have to wander the Hak as outsiders, unless they are clearly spell casters of some sort and can contribute to the clan in some other way. Individuals in this social position live on the functional fringe of their culture. Many travel to High Tenlish as the Faleem are much more forgiving on this issue than the other clans.

Horses and Weapons

The Adiel favor the lance and the Tesh Nidja (Crescent Moon) or sickle sword. While there are many competent archers among the Adiel, the Adiel are very comfortable functioning as light cavalry and quickly take that role in battle. Adiel will often use the terrain to their advantage, using ride by attacks to take them from cover and back into cover, drawing pursuers into murderous prepared bow fire as they follow to close.





Horse Breeding

The baseline horse statistics are just that—a baseline. Among the Peshwah, where horses are bred for specific traits and specific uses, the basic horse or steppes charger reflects the basic potential of each species. Peshwah breed for more than this and for an individual with enough connections and coin, many different variations in type can be purchased.

Light horses can be bred for up to five alterations from the basic type. Heavy horses, already being bred for a larger size, can be bred for up to three alterations from the basic type. Heavy steppes chargers can be bred for up to five alterations, and the versatile light steppes charger can be bred for up to seven alterations from the baseline horse. Each alteration at least doubles the cost of the horse in question. Several alterations, such as Fast, are part of a tree and take up more slots, and are subsequently more expensive. Any horse that is changed from the baseline stock is prized by the Peshwah and will not ordinarily be traded outside of the tribe in question. Different tribes are known for different traits and the horses of their warriors are bred and known for specific traits.

The base price of a light steppes charger is 300gp and a heavy steppes charger is 800gp. The base price of a heavy warhorse is 400gp, of a light warhorse is 150gp, of a heavy draft horse is 200gp, and finally, of a light riding horse is 75gp.

Trait Name	Tree/slots	Multiplier	Description
Fast +10	Speed/1	X2	Increases horse base move by 10
Fast +20	Speed/2	X4	Increases horse base move by 20
Fast +30	Speed/3	X8	Increases horse base move by 30
Extra hp/+1	Tough/1	X2	Increases horses hit points by one per hit die
Extra hp/+2	Tough/2	X3	Increases horses hit points by two per hit die
Extra hp/+3	Tough/3	X4	Increases horses hit points by three per hit die
Rage	Rage/1	X2	Rage as a barbarian of the same hit dice
Tough hide/+1 AC	AC/1	X2	Horse has +1 natural AC
Tough hide/+2 AC	AC/2	X3	Horse has +2 natural AC
Tough hide/+3 AC	AC/3	X4	Horse has +3 natural AC
Hard Fighter	Hoof/1	X2	Weapon Focus [hoof]
Hard Fighter	Hoof/2	X3	Weapon Specialization (+2 damage with hoof)
Hard Biter	Bite/1	X2	Weapon Focus [bite]
Hard Biter	Bite/2	X3	Weapon Specialization (+2 damage with bite)
Saddle Mate	Riding/1	X2	+2 to Ride checks
Increased Con/+2	Con/1	X2	Base Constitution stat is increased by 2
Increased Con/+4	Con/2	X4	Base Constitution stat is increased by 4
Increased Str/+2	Str/1	X2	Base Strength stat is increased by 2
Increased Str/+4	Str/2	X4	Base Strength stat is increased by 4
Increased Dex/+2	Dex/1	X2	Base Dexterity stat is increased by 2
Increased Dex/+4	Dex/2	X4	Base Dexterity stat is increased by 4
Increased HD/+1	HD/1	X3	Base HD for type increase by 1
Increased HD/+2	HD/2	X6	Base HD for type increase by 2
Increased Int/+2	Int/1	X2	Base Intelligence stat is increased by 2
Increased Int/+4	Int/2	X3	Base Intelligence stat is increased by 4
Increased Wis/+2	Wis/1	X2	Base Wisdom stat is increased by 2
Increased Wis/+4	Wis/2	X3	Base Wisdom stat is increased by 4
Increased Cha/+2	Cha/1	X2	Base Charisma stat increased by 2
Stealthy	Stealthy/1	X2	+2 on Hide and Move Silently checks
Alert	Alert/1	X2	+2 Bonus on Spot and Listen Checks
Jumper	Jump/1	X2	+10 Bonus to jump checks
Bull Rush	Aggressive/1	X2	Improved Bull Rush
Overrun	Aggressive/1	X2	Improved Overrun

For example, Peshwah na-Hanso am-Adiel, has bred a horse ideally suited for chasing fleeing Afridhi down over the open plains and has staked the fortune of his clan on this mount. The horse in question is a light steppes charger and can carry up to eight alterations. Hanso has bred her for speed and endurance. Peshleh na-Sungu am-Hanso has Fast +30 (x8 cost, uses three slots) Increased Con +4 (x4 costs, takes up two slots) and Extra HP/+2 (x3 cost, uses two slots.) The horse in question would have a base move of 90 ft., a Con of 20, and a Fort Save of +8. It would truly be a horse among horses, and would likely be worth more than all the warhorses in Jackport (assuming, of course, that there were no more than 244 normal light warhorses in Jackport).

Adiel horses are almost always dappled gray. Adiel are particularly fond of ornate tack, and their saddles are often works of art. The Adiel are known for very fast light steppes chargers. Their combat style is fluid and liquid, and based on quick, brutal surprise attacks. Nothing suits the Adiel better than being able to outride and evade the heavy cavalry thrown at them by outsiders.

The Briela

Population: 300 adults. 175 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 700 horses, 75 oxen.
Horses: Multi-colored Pintos, called paints, known for endurance.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Somhak, Zah, Ornidri, Leron. Current: Somhak, Zah, Ornidri.

Lands and History

The Briela have sought the Bow of Hadeen for centuries and with particular vigor since Hadeen's return and murder at the hands of the Cult of Calelrin. The quest for the Bow of Hadeen pre-dates the coming of the Afridhi and has its origins in the earliest days of the ascension of Hadeen to godhood beside Hak. At that time, the Briela were the caretakers of Hadeen's earthly symbols of power, his bow and arrows. Soon after the ascension of Hadeen, the leado of the Briela, Peshwah na-Wilkanja, was seduced by the cut of Calelrin. Jealous of the ascended god, he took the symbols of Hadeen's power and fled into the Hak, never to return.

The Briela have pursued the traitor's legacy since that time, seeking the Bow. Before the coming of Hadeen and Raelralataen, the bulk of the Briela still lived upon the Plains of Hak and the High Hak. Each year, a percentage of their bravest and most adept searched the world for the Bow, stopping their quest only when Hadeen returned, his bow and quiver in hand. The Briela paid a high price in blood defending the Plains of Hak from the Afridhi. The followers of Zugzul seem to seek out the Briela at every turn and specifically targeted their tents and herds with destruction. After Hadeen's fall, the remnants of the Briela pledged themselves anew to the hunt for his bow. The entire tribe took to the road, traveling across Blackmoor and the Thonian Empire in small bands of ten or twenty, each seeking sign that would lead them to the Bow of Hadeen. Unique among the Peshwah, the Briela have adopted caravanserai style wagons, and pull them with oxen and unbondable draft horses. Prophecy states that it will be the last of the Briela that finds the bow and returns it to the people, uniting them under one leader. It also speaks of the destruction of the great enemy at the hands of this same person.

Because the Briela have spent centuries wandering the globe, they are skilled as rangers and also as bards. The Briela can choose bard or ranger as a favored class. The Kijiru of the Briela are famous throughout Blackmoor and lands beyond as storytellers and diplomats. They are often sought out in the cities of the south as mediators and negotiators. In many places in the deep-south, Peshwah is a word that is unknown, and Briela a word that identifies and acknowledges the finest deal makers ever known.

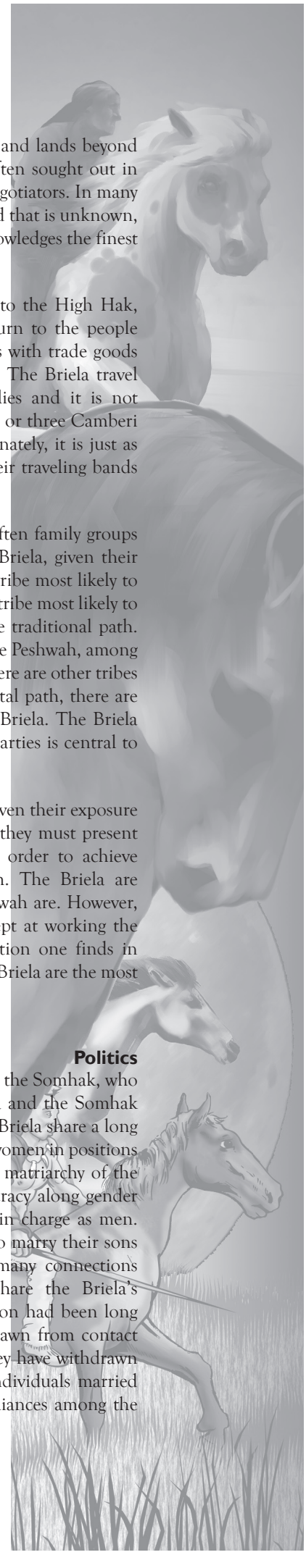
Each year, all the Briela that can return to the High Hak, do return. Each Camberi, the Briela return to the people with news of the outside world, as well as with trade goods and items they could not find otherwise. The Briela travel the world in individual clans and families and it is not uncommon for a family group to miss two or three Camberi in a row, before returning again. Unfortunately, it is just as common for the Briela to have one of their traveling bands never return.

The Briela have a diversity of skills and often family groups have a mixture of character classes. The Briela, given their exposure to the rest of the world, are the tribe most likely to have wizards in their number and also the tribe most likely to accept difference and divergence from the traditional path. Although Noble as a class is rare among the Peshwah, among the Briela it is a common choice. While there are other tribes that are more liberal in their developmental path, there are no tribes as tolerant of difference as the Briela. The Briela marry for love, and the consent of both parties is central to their approach to this institution.

The Briela are very much Peshwah, even given their exposure to other cultures. Briela understand that they must present themselves to others in specific ways in order to achieve their goal in communicating with them. The Briela are adept at tracking and traveling as all Peshwah are. However, very many of the Briela are also very adept at working the network of information and communication one finds in urban environments. Of all the tribes, the Briela are the most flexible and adaptable.

Politics

The Briela have their closest alliances with the Somhak, who share their guilt over Hadeen. The Briela and the Somhak traditionally intermarry. The Zah and the Briela share a long history, too, as the Briela have quite a few women in positions of absolute authority also. While not the matriarchy of the Zah, the Briela have a functional meritocracy along gender lines and there are just as many women in charge as men. Because of that, the Zah are often eager to marry their sons into this tribe. The Ornidri have very many connections in Blackmoor and also in Ten and share the Briela's understanding of other cultures. The Leron had been long term allies of the Briela, but have withdrawn from contact with this group in much the same way they have withdrawn from all save the Zah. While there are individuals married across long standing traditional family alliances among the



Leron, the Briela do not have them same deep contact with this group that they once did.

The Briela have either the grudging respect of the other clans or their outright admiration. Their quest for the Bow of Hadeen is viewed with mystical reverence by the most pious among the Peshwah. Those of a more pragmatic bent appreciate the intelligence gathered by the Briela and appreciate the rare goods injected into their culture as a result of Briela's wanderings.

The Briela have a harder time with the Qulaam and the Sufz than they do with other clans, and for completely different reasons. The Sufz are understood as quarrelsome and intractable by most Briela, although they are far too politic to say so openly. The Qulaam have been skeptical in the past of the utility of the Briela's journey and see it more as their collective penance than as a legitimate search for the artifact with a reasonable chance of success. The Briela have taken actual and active offense at the inference that they cannot succeed and are wasting their time for the sake of their collective ego.

The Faleem and the Briela do not have as gentile a relationship as one might initially suspect. Plainly, the Faleem view the Briela as competition in trade. There are some among the Briela who see themselves as merchants searching for the Bow of Hadeen and do little to calm or set aside this competition with the Faleem.

The Briela families are balkanized into forty small traveling groups. The title of leado means less among this tribe than it does among any other. Leado is the title bestowed upon the senior most Briela matriarch or patriarch present at the Camberi each spring. Currently, the leado is Peshwah na-Lodrini. Lodrini has spent the last several years searching the Firefrost Channel. One of the few people who can cross through Skandaharan lands unscathed and unmolested, Lordini's consistent relative close proximity to the High Hak have made it easy for her and her haksoja to return each year for the Camberi. She has been among the people for five of the last nine years and has been the leado for four of those years.

Aged Peshwah na-Cusalk is legendary among the Briela and the Peshwah as a survivor and a negotiator. In his youth, he went and spoke to Watchworks the dragon, and served seven years of servitude in exchange for all the dragon knew about the Bow of Hadeen. He returns to the lands of the people once every seven years, and is always the functioning leado of the Briela for the Camberi.

Peshwah na-Visdu is a druid of Hak and her band of Briela all rangers and druids also of that god. She is said to spend more time in horse form than in human form and has traveled deep into the Thonian Empire seeking the Bow of Hadeen. She is beautiful and ageless in the way of druids and has returned several items of power to the Peshwah.

Rituals and Rites

The spellcasters among the Briela are said to have a special ritual that will let them communicate with any senior Briela family leader. In reality, the Briela have forty Orbs of Yoosef. These items are attuned to those of Briela blood and were Yoosef's gift to the Briela on their quest to find the Bow of Hadeen. The Briela use these orbs to communicate among each other and to assist each other in their quest.

Briela youth have a limited childhood and are engaged in the long journey up until they enter into their first horse bond. It is not unusual for the Briela to have their youth foster for a year or two with their cousins in the allied tribe. The Briela are very much aware that their children are often distant from what is Peshwah. By spending time with the Somhak or with the Zah, their children are reminded of the reasons why they Briela seek the Bow across the land. The Briela usually marry for love, but often seek out mates with skills sets needed for their wandering bands.

Weapons and Horses

The Briela ride pintos of many different colors, and have a very diverse gene pool because of the areas they travel over. Most of their horses have white markings. This often shows as bay and white mixes. The Briela segregate their riding horses from their draft horses and breed the two for different uses. Briela horses are known for their size and strength.

The Briela wield an eclectic mix of weaponry and each one of them develops a set of weapons suitable to their expertise. When it comes to traditional weapons, the Briela prefer the bow, hand ax and horse shield.

The Bortai

Population: 600 adults. 425 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 1800 horses, 3500 grazers, many dogs.
Horses: Grullo; grayish brown with dorsal stripes and cobwebbing on legs.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Adiel, Sufz, Somhak, and Leron. Current: Adiel, Sufz, Somhak, and Leron.

Lands and History

The Bortai are ardent traditionalists. They believe the old ways are the best ways and have managed to maintain a lifestyle closest to their ancestors. The Bortai believe that life in towns is a type of death and that the Peshwah must walk and ride the plains if they want to maintain their identity. The Bortai are pure hunter gatherers and their lifestyle and modes of social organization reflect this.

The haksoja of the Bortai are known throughout the Peshwah as raiders and as fierce warriors. The Bortai are just as likely to be barbarians as they are rangers and this tribe actually has barbarian as a favored class. The Zah believe that the Bortai bond closely with their mounts and they are closer to their horses in spirit than many of the other tribes. Some hold this as a mark of their purity. Some, like the Faleem, hold it as proof that the Peshwah are too close to their animal spirit and surrender their reason, the tool Hak has given the people to manage the Pesh Briena-Leh.

The Bortai, although they are proudly Peshwah, are not xenophobic like the Adiel and the Qulaam. The Bortai believe that the Peshwah should walk among the children of Odir and do so in remembrance of Hak's time among the heathen. The Bortai also have a love of adventure and the kijiru of the Bortai know many epics known as haksojacaru, "blood of saddle mates." Many of these poems are truly epic in scope and in length. All Bortai men aspire to a central role in an epic tale. They accept that their life is fleeting and that Hak's halls await them. When the Bortai say, "Hika Ai!" they say it with a full and ready heart. The Bortai have a reputation for fearlessness that is well founded. They seek glory in life so that they might live on after death.

The Bortai are still Peshwah. Although they rarely back down from a fight, they are not reckless. The Bortai pride themselves on their ability to set a cunning ambush and lure and opponent into a trap. They also pride themselves on their ability to "liberate" enslaved horses from the lehcus recognizing that the horseblind cannot bring the horses to their full potential.

The Bortai are the image summoned to the mind of most civilized northerners when they think of Peshwah. The Bortai have a long history of both raiding northern cities and provinces, especially Dragonia, and also serving as mercenary light cavalry for the northern barons. The Bortai find the politics of the north amusing in their subterfuge. Many a Bortai earned his haksojacaru in service to some wizard or sorcerer during the Mage Wars.

Likewise, Bortai society is the most patriarchal of all the tribes. Female Bortai warriors are the rare exception. Bortai men are almost always the senior most in marriages and their woman are routinely married off to other tribes, and their marriages are usually arranged.

Most recently, the Bortai have entered into a close and mutually supporting alliance with King Uther Andahar. Uther's interaction with Peshwah na-Shepro gave him insight into the mindset of the Peshwah, and Uther quickly came to understand the Peshwah haksoja as their equivalent of the adventuring band common throughout the north, and in Blackmoor. He also recognized that he would never have the respect of the Peshwah as subjects, and must instead earn it as their equal. In Peshwah na-Shepro, Uther found an ally and a gateway between the two peoples.

The Bortai actively seek out the enemies of the Peshwah in times of war. The Bortai collect scalps, a habit they learned hunting orcs for the dwarves of the Crystal Peaks. Afridhi scalps are a favorite. When the Afridhi first came on, it was the Bortai who acted as the heavy cavalry of the Peshwah, delivering hard and sharp blows against exposed units of Afridhi cavalry. The Bortai revel in this role and their war cries are the source of many Afridhi nightmares.

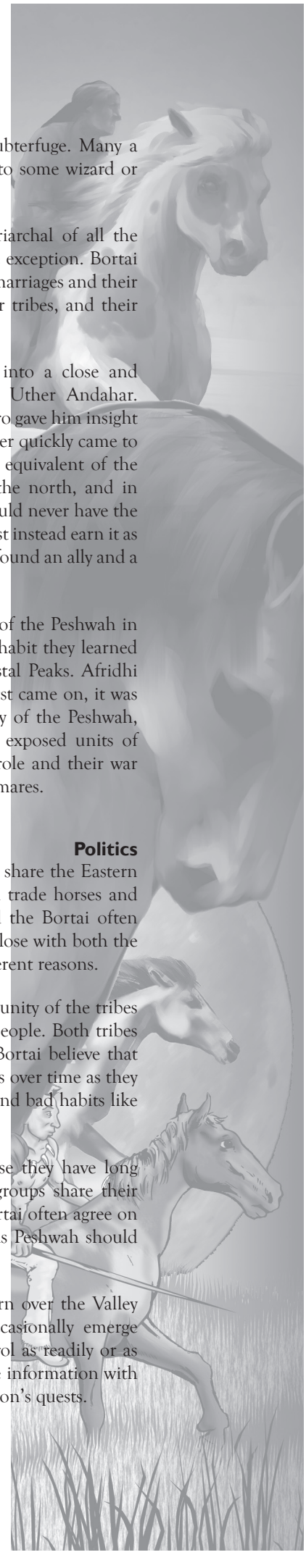
Politics

The Bortai are closest with the Sufz, who share the Eastern Hak with them. The Sufz and the Bortai trade horses and wives with great regularity. The Sufz and the Bortai often travel together as raiders. The Bortai are close with both the Adiel and the Somhak for completely different reasons.

The Somhak and the Bortai both see the unity of the tribes as central to the long term safety of the people. Both tribes have worked towards this, although the Bortai believe that the Peshwah have been diluting themselves over time as they take up more and more strange customs and bad habits like agriculture and town dwelling.

The Adiel are close to the Bortai because they have long shared grazing lands and because both groups share their veneration for the old ways. Adiel and Bortai often agree on many issues, chief of which is that what is Peshwah should remain unchanged.

The Leron and the Bortai share a concern over the Valley of the Ancients and the things that occasionally emerge from there. While the Bortai do not patrol as readily or as aggressively as the Leron do, they do share information with the Leron and have contributed to the Leron's quests.



The Bortai and the Faleem do not get along. Their world views are too different. Likewise, the Qulaam, Peshneath and Ornidri have all found themselves the subject of Bortai scorn over the lifestyles they have chosen. The Bortai and the Irfat have a grudging respect for each other, although there has been outright disagreement between the two tribes over how the Afridhi should be handled. The Bortai find the techniques of the Irfat, at times, extreme.

The Zah and the Bortai disagree regularly and often along gender lines. The Bortai respect the mystics and holy women of the Zah, but see their role as advisory. The Zah, of course, disagree. The Briela have the open support of the Bortai, and the Bortai have allowed their young men to marry into the Briela if terms can be arranged.

Although Peshwah na-Shepro is a respected member of his tribe, he is not the leado. That title falls to Peshwah na-Mundi. Mundi is a hardened veteran of raids into the Thonian Empire. Mundi is a brutal and powerful warrior known for his ferocity in battle. While his mental capacities are far from the sharpest, he is a former member of Shepro's Haksoja, and he is assisted in governance by his Faleem wife, Peshwah na-Sulifa am-Somhak. Of course, suggesting to Mundi that his wife is anything other than a dutiful Bortai spouse is hazardous.

The Hommett of the Bortai are very influential and hold more actual power than in many other tribes. Hak is the god most often worshipped and there are as many druids and clerics in their numbers. Peshwah na-Tri is well known among the Bortai as a wise teacher and astute judge of character. Virtually all disputes among the Bortai end before him.

Rites and Rituals

The Bortai take the Pesh Briena-Leh very seriously. It is the center of the life of a Peshwah and is more important to them than rites of marriage. The Bortai are in the horse bond their entire lives and routinely enter into deeper and more advanced horse bonds as they age and become more experienced. Bortai who cannot horse bond are stricken from the tribe. Only spouses who can bond with a horse are brought into a tribe and marriages are arranged.

Bortai driven from their tribe, often end up either traveling to High Tenlish to live among the Faleem. Some join the order of Raelralataen or traveling into the lands of Blackmoor to live life as a mercenary. Some end up living among the Peshwah as clanless wastrels, living in the fringe of Peshwah culture.

Weapons and Horses

The Bortai favor the lance and the bullova. Bortai rarely use shields and prefer two handed weapons. Many of the Bortai use pole arms when dismounted. While the use of glaives and the like may be proof of the external influence that Blackmoor has had on this culture; discussing this with the Bortai will quickly lead to a cessation of conversation and a demonstration of the use of the weapons in question.

Bortai horses are tough and are known for the vast amount of damage they can take. The Bortai breed their horses with durability in mind and their horses are an even match for the most outraged grazer bull.

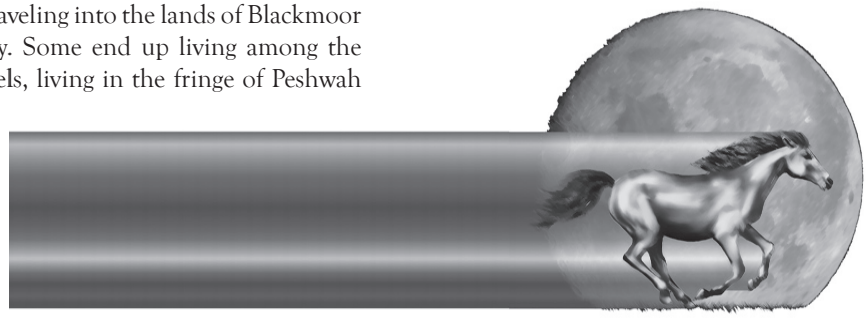
The Faleem

Population: 1200 adults. 725 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 3000 horses, 1500 oxen, 5000 goats and sheep, domesticated ducks.
Horses: Bay with classic black markings on forelock, tail and mane.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Somhak, Zah, Peshneath, Qulaam, Irfat. Current: Zah, Peshneath, Qulaam, Ornidri, Irfat, and Adiel.

Lands and History

The Faleem are long term residents of the High Hak, and, along with the Zah and Qulaam, have always wintered in that space while the other tribes descended down onto the Plains of Hak. The Faleem are very devout, very frugal, and very ingenious, successfully domesticating both birds and sheep, and also learning how to make paper. The Faleem are Peshwah, but Peshwah who dwell in towns and cities and have abandoned the traditional life of the Peshwah. The survival of the Peshwah as a nation is tied to this change. However, the life the Faleem lead is not one that has been quickly embraced by the rest of the Peshwah. To many Peshwah, it should not be.

The center of life for the Faleem is the fortress city of High Tenlish between the Sundance and Firebird Peaks. At its center is the Tampul am-Raelralataen ("temple-fortress of Raelralataen") and this rests at the center of religious and social life for the Faleem.



While the Faleem venerate Hak as do all Peshwah, it is Raelralataen and Yoosef who the Faleem hold at the center of their spiritual life. To the Faleem, Raelralataen is the law giver, the binder of contracts and the keeper of deals. Yoosef is the god of innovation and tolerance, two traits the Faleem value as an ideal. Daily routine for the Faleem is tied around veneration of these two gods. Conversation with them is always peppered with statements like, "Be it pleasing to Yoosef," and "I swear in Grimwall's presence." The Faleem publicly display their piety and each household is littered with statues and prayer rugs. Likewise, the Faleem carry prayer medals and scraps of parchment with sacred writings inscribed upon them. Often these will be secured to their clothing with wax seals and it is not unusual to find the same on the doorframes of their houses.

High Tenlish is the city to the Faleem. It rests on a precipice overlooking a surrounding wood and the Gulmere. This space was originally the domain of a band of Cumasti Elves, who have since moved into the Greenwood. Much of what the Faleem know of metal working and bow making comes from the Elves of the Greenwood. Likewise, much of what the Faleem learned of agriculture comes from adaptations they made from Elven techniques of managing their forests.

The Faleem grow virtually seventy-five percent of the grains that support the Peshwah. If it weren't for the activity of this tribe, then the Peshwah would have long been driven from the High Hak by famine. The farmers of the Faleem feed the Peshwah. They feel this responsibility deeply and see it as their sacred duty, bearing the resentment of the other more traditional tribes with good humor and pointing out that this all must be Hak's plan. The Faleem are extremely tolerant of the foibles and prejudices of their own people.

The Faleem have perfected many crafts and approach each task with the same diligence that all Peshwah apply to horse breeding. The process of perfection, believe the Faleem, must be brought into each and every thing that a person does, whether it is breed horses or making pottery. The Faleem seal each thing they do with the symbol of Raelralataen binding the will of the god into the things that they make.

Young Faleem routinely take their horsebond and spend a period of time riding the land, trading as merchants and coming to know the people. The Faleem trade freely in information and goods, and take particular pleasure in the trade of horses. The Faleem will trade horses with non-Peshwah if those individuals demonstrate that they will treat the horses they buy well and fairly. In general, a ranger or a druid buying from the Faleem need not worry. Likewise, priests and paladins of neutral and good aligned gods will usually be allowed to purchase horses by the Faleem. All others will need to have a Peshwah swear for their character.

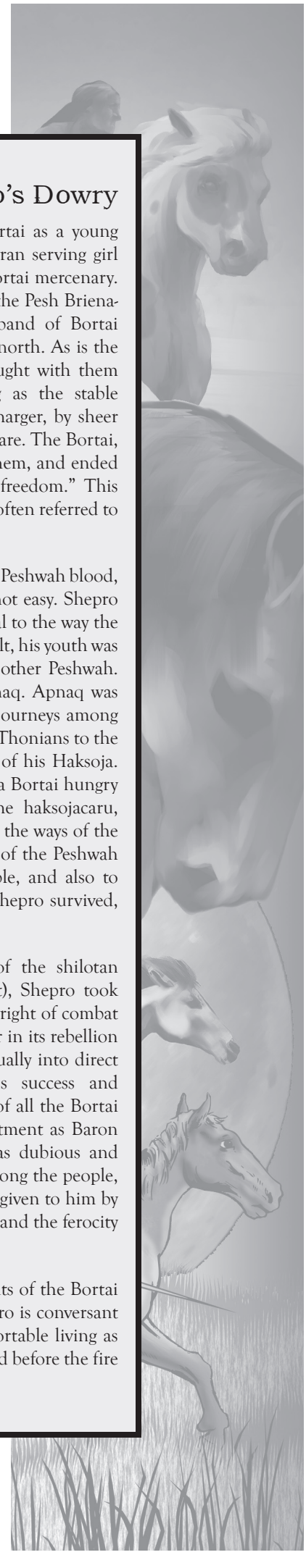
Shepro's Dowry

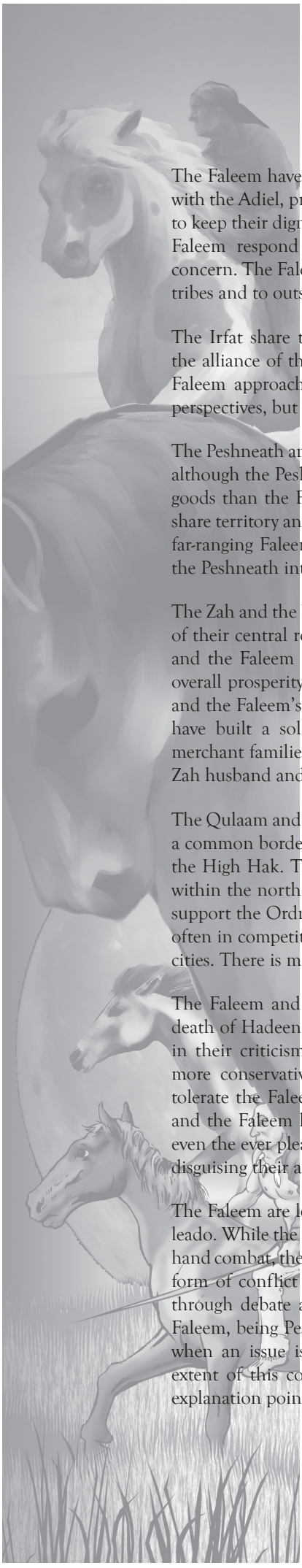
Peshwah na-Shepro came into the Bortai as a young boy, the half-breed son of a Blackmooran serving girl from Pug's Station and a wandering Bortai mercenary. His mixed blood was no hindrance in the Pesh Briena-Leh. When Shepro was nine, a warband of Bortai passed through Pug's station traveling north. As is the custom on long rides, the Bortai brought with them several extra mounts. Shepro, acting as the stable hand, bonded with a young steppes charger, by sheer accident as a result of his care for the mare. The Bortai, seeing this, demanded he travel with them, and ended up trading two horses to secure his "freedom." This exchange, called Shepro's Dowry, is an often referred to date in the Bortai calendar.

Although Shepro had demonstrated his Peshwah blood, his transition into Bortai culture was not easy. Shepro was not of pure blood, a concept central to the way the Bortai understand themselves. As a result, his youth was hard, and he faced constant abuse by other Peshwah. Shepro's sponsor was Peshwah na-Apnaq. Apnaq was well known around the Bortai for his journeys among the northerners, for his raids upon the Thonians to the south, and for the loyalty and ferocity of his Haksoja. Apnaq, as Shepro's patron and also as a Bortai hungry for fame and immortality through the haksojacaru, saw the inclusion of someone fluent in the ways of the north and also well-versed in the ways of the Peshwah as a strong addition both to his people, and also to his band. Under Apnaq's patronage, Shepro survived, learned, and eventually flourished.

After Apnaq's death at the hands of the shilotan (dragon) Uvu am-Ska (Black in Heart), Shepro took command of Apnaq's haksoja through right of combat and led them north to assist Blackmoor in its rebellion against the Thonian empire and eventually into direct service of Uther Andahar. Shepro's success and support of the King, and the support of all the Bortai of Uther, eventually led to his appointment as Baron of Dragonia, a title the Bortai view as dubious and tease him about to this day. At best among the people, Shepro has earned an honorific, a title given to him by Blackmoor in recognition of his daring and the ferocity of the Bortai.

Shepro splits his residence between tents of the Bortai and the halls of Dragonia. While Shepro is conversant in both worlds, he is truly more comfortable living as part of the Hak, under the open sky, and before the fire each night.





Politics

The Faleem have developed steadily improving relationships with the Adiel, primarily by rendering aid, allowing the Adiel to keep their dignity, and offering support whenever needed. Faleem respond to anger with laughter and scorn with concern. The Faleem are always fair in their dealings to other tribes and to outsiders. This has born fruit with the Adiel.

The Irfat share the Faleem's devotion to Raelralataen and the alliance of this tribe is long standing. The Irfat and the Faleem approach the worship of Grimjaws from different perspectives, but are unified by their piety.

The Peshneath and the Faleem both have a mercantile streak, although the Peshneath are more focused on the creation of goods than the Faleem are. The Peshneath and the Faleem share territory and resources with great regularity and it is the far-ranging Faleem who have taken the spider silk armor of the Peshneath into all of the North.

The Zah and the Faleem have long standing alliances because of their central role in the Peshwah economy. Both the Zah and the Faleem are merchants and both work towards the overall prosperity of the tribes. The Zah's regulation of salt, and the Faleem's distribution of goods among the Peshwah, have built a solid alliance. Some of the most successful merchant families among the Peshwah involve a Faleem and Zah husband and wife.

The Qulaam and the Faleem share long term alliances tied to a common border and the Qulaami's long time presence on the High Hak. The Ornidri, with their far ranging contacts within the north, are also allies of the Faleem, who work to support the Ordnidri's work. The Briela and the Faleem are often in competition as they trade in Thonian and northern cities. There is mild dislike between the two tribal groups.

The Faleem and the Somhak have been at odds since the death of Hadeen, as the Faleem at that time were very vocal in their criticism of the Somhak over the gods' loss. The more conservative tribes, the Sufz, Leron and Bortai, all tolerate the Faleem and their lifestyle. However, the Bortai and the Faleem have an obvious dislike for each other and even the ever pleasant and gracious Faleem have a hard time disguising their animosity.

The Faleem are led by a council of leaders that appoints the leado. While the other tribes choose this position via hand to hand combat, the Faleem select there leaders through another form of conflict almost as deadly. Their leaders are drawn through debate and the formal presentation of ideas. The Faleem, being Peshwah, will sometimes report to bloodshed when an issue is particularly hotly contested. Usually the extent of this conflict is a quick dagger slash made as an explanation point, but fatalities are not unknown.

The current leado is Peshwan na-Fedil feh Shu am-Kadish. Her husband, Peshwah na-Curuis of the Zah, is well traveled among the clans both as a salt merchant and also a trader in rare cloth. Fedil's family perfected the domestication of the silk worm many generations ago and has prospered as a result. Fedil is an even handed and fair administrator and has worked hard to increase the productivity of the Faleem land. Her concern continues to be rebuilding a devastated Peshwah population and maximizing the resources the High Hak can produce in support of that population. To Fedil, and to most of the Faleem, the war will take many, many years to resolve, if not generations. The Faleem are certain that it is only a matter of time before the rest of the clans come to an understanding of the necessity of the life they offer them.

Peshwah na-Kurell is the Grand Master of the Tampul am-Raelralataen in High Tenlish and formerly Irfat. He is known throughout the Peshwah as an individual of irrefutable honor and honesty. Kurell is lehcus and an advocate for the rights of the horseblind. He leads the fighting monks of the Tampul from the monastery and has done much to improve the position of the horseblind in Peshwah society. He maintains that the monks of his order have been denied the horsebond so that they might be pure in their judgment and that this sacrifice has been asked of them by Raelralataen. Kurell and the senior brother's and sisters' of his order are known as fair and just judges and are often sought out by other Peshwah to resolve conflicts or to oversee honor duels. Kurell has never been defeated in a fight and his prowess in combat is legendary. It is said he can slay a grazer in one blow with his bare hands. The monks of his order number in the hundreds, all are horseblind and the majority are drawn from the horseblind of other clans. The balance are Faleem who have given up their horsebond to serve Raelralataen in this special way.

Peshwah na-Purju is the High Priest of Raelralataen in the Tampul. He oversees the day to day administration of the city and the people. It is the duty of the priests of his order to meet out justice among the Faleem, but more importantly for all the Peshwah, to record the births and deaths of all the people and to certify the purity of the bloodlines of their horses. Purju is both fair and wise and his people are stringent in maintaining records of the both Peshwah and Peshleh heredity. The sworn word of an elder, a Hommett and a horse bonded warrior is necessary to certify the birth of a Peshwah or a Peshleh. This rite is usually conducted during the Camberi.

Rites and Rituals

The horsebond is not a life long commitment for most Faleem and is usually part of the youth of a Faleem. Some Faleem stay in a horsebond their entire lives, but this is not the experience of the majority. Usually it is the far ranging merchants of the Faleem or the warrior elite of the tribe who keep a constant mount. Faleem marriages are arranged by the parents but both partners must be compatible and agree to the marriage. Faleem parents will not force a marriage that is not wanted.

Faleem are pious and strictly observe a day of rest each ten-day where no labor is done and the day is spent at temple or in contemplation of the divine. The Faleem usually spend at least one hour out of each day in prayer and facing the Tower of Salt.

Weapons and Horses

The Faleem favor the scimitar and falchion. Many are excellent archers and the long composite bow and the short composite bow are both weapons often seen in Faleem hands. Faleem warriors commonly wear chain shirts, carry horse hide shields and wear steel caps wrapped in colorful scarves, noting family affiliation.

Faleem horses are almost always bay, marked a deep brown with black mane. The Faleem breed their horses for strength and the ability to carry loads, and Faleem horses are known for their raw power.

The Irfat

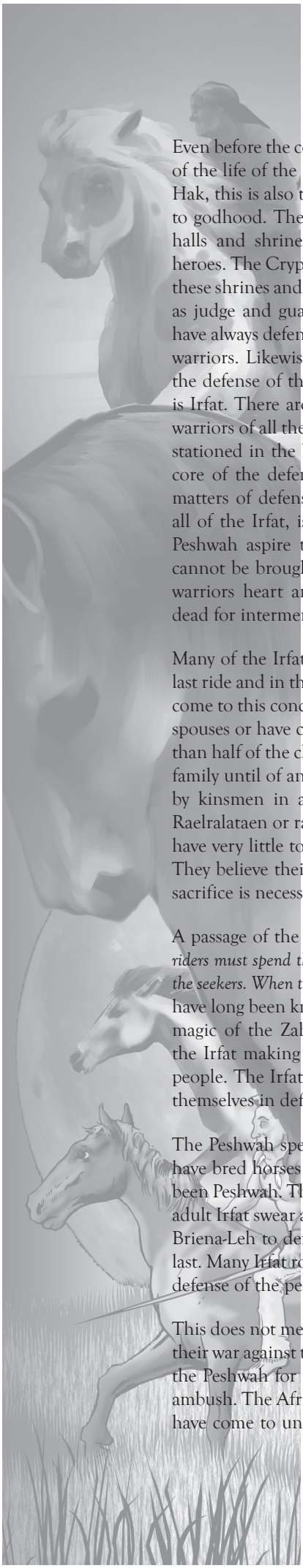
Population: 500 adults. 500 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 1200 horses.
Horses: Black horse, with occasional roan. These markings are called "blue."
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Faleem, Adiel, Ornidri, Qulaam, Somhak. Current: Faleem, Adiel, Ornidri, Qulaam.

Lands and History

The Irfat are defined by war. Their identity has been shaped by the conflict with the Afridhi and the Irfat have transformed themselves from a tribe of skilled hunters to a band of seasoned soldiers. The Irfat have a deep and abiding hatred for the children of Zugzul and they hunt them with tenacious ferocity. When the Afridhi speak of the Peshwah, it is the Irfat assassin and ranger they see in their mind's eye. To the Irfat, the ends justify the means and whatever they need do to overcome the Afridhi, they will do.

The Irfat have a well-earned reputation among the people as dour and serious. The Irfat are the guardians of the dead, and the guardians of the main pass into the High Hak, called Naktok or Barrow Gate in the language of the People. The Irfat were once the most numerous of the Peshwah, and the tribe from which Raelralataen was ascended. The war with the Afridhi cost the Irfat much, and the might of the tribe was spent defending the High Hak and the other tribes. The Irfat are respected by the tribes for their battle prowess. Most especially, they known for their stealth and cunning.





Even before the coming of the Afridhi, Naktok was the center of the life of the Irfat. The central pass through the Walls of Hak, this is also the place from which Raelralataen ascended to godhood. The valleys and hollows of the Naktok are the halls and shrines of the tombs of the Peshwah's greatest heroes. The Crypt of the Horselords is the most important of these shrines and the place where the worship of Raelralataen as judge and guardian of the dead is centralized. The Irfat have always defended this place and this valley with their best warriors. Likewise, all the tribes send war bands to support the defense of the High Hak. The current Sirk am-Peshwah is Irfat. There are between 300 and 600 hardened Peshwah warriors of all the clans save Qulaam, Peshneath and Ornidri stationed in the Naktok at all times. These warriors are the core of the defense of the Hak and answer to the Sirk in matters of defense. Their upkeep, as well as the upkeep of all of the Irfat, is provided by the rest of the Peshwah. All Peshwah aspire to rest interred in Naktok. When a body cannot be brought here, Peshwah routinely bring the fallen warriors heart and prized possessions to the valley of the dead for interment.

Many of the Irfat believe their horse clan and tribe is on its last ride and in the last two decades more and more Irfat have come to this conclusion. As a result, very few of the Irfat take spouses or have children. When childbirth does occur, more than half of the children are fostered to the non-Irfat parent's family until of an age to return to the Irfat. Those not raised by kinsmen in another tribe, are raised by the priests of Raelralataen or raised by the tribe's horse breeders. The Irfat have very little to do with life as the Peshwah understand it. They believe their path is the path of death, and that is the sacrifice is necessary for the survival of the people.

A passage of the prophecy of Hadeen reads, *"...and the black riders must spend themselves like arrows from a quiver in defense of the seekers. When the last falls, the Bow will be returned."* The Irfat have long been known as the Black Riders and the divinatory magic of the Zah and the priests of Raelralataen point to the Irfat making some massive sacrifice in the name of the people. The Irfat believe they make one every day, spending themselves in defense of the Peshwah.

The Peshwah speak of the Irfat as the black riders and they have bred horses the color of night for as long as there have been Peshwah. The seekers are understood as the Briela. Most adult Irfat swear a blood oath soon after passage though Pesh Briena-Leh to defend the seekers and the Peshwah unto the last. Many Irfat routinely report dreams of their own death in defense of the people. They believe the signs are clear.

This does not mean that the Irfat are imprudent or foolish in their war against the Afridhi. The Irfat are known throughout the Peshwah for their ability to stage a well planned raid or ambush. The Afridhi have come to fear the Irfat and the Irfat have come to understand the Afridhi very well. As a result, the Irfat are very adept at picking off caravans, stripping the Afridhi of their horses, and stalking Afridhi who move on the open plains.

The Irfat patrol the walls of the Hak and work closely with the Ornidri and the Qulaam. Irfat may hunt singly, but the most common unit is the haksoja. Irfat haksoja are as likely to be based around family units as not, although fragments of shattered family groups are just as common in Haksoja. Not every Irfat is suited for a life embracing death. Often Irfat men and women will choose to marry into another clan. The Irfat do not see shame in this. They see hope.

Politics

The Irfat and the Somhak support each other in war, but are not the fast friends they once were. The Irfat have been pointed and direct in their critique of the Somhak in the death of Hadeen and there is bad blood between these two horse clans as a result. The Somhak and the Irfat fight side by side. They do not share campfires.

The Ornidri and the Qulaam are stout defenders of the walls of Hak as are the Irfat. This alliance has intensified since the loss of the Plains of Hak. The Irfat look on the other tribes as dependable and stalwart and are viewed in the same way. The Qulaami sacrifice of the plains is viewed as particularly noble by the Irfat.

The Adiel and the Irfat have fought side by side for generations and their horses share a very common genetic makeup. When the Irfat plan a raid, they draw upon the light cavalry of the Adiel. When the Irfat seek to place a child or marry off a son or daughter, they go first to the Adiel. Adiel tents and Irfat tents are nearly identical in layout and style. The two tribes share very similar world views.

The Irfat and the Faleem are bound together by their worship of Raelralataen. The Irfat have accepted and understand the aspect of Raelralataen that the Faleem venerate and see it as part of the gods plan to change the Peshwah. The Irfat respect and cling to the old ways but understand that change is necessary and constant. They have a grudging respect of the Faleem. Also, the Faleem are the primary source of support for the Irfat, providing them with horses, food, and a constant supply of weapons.

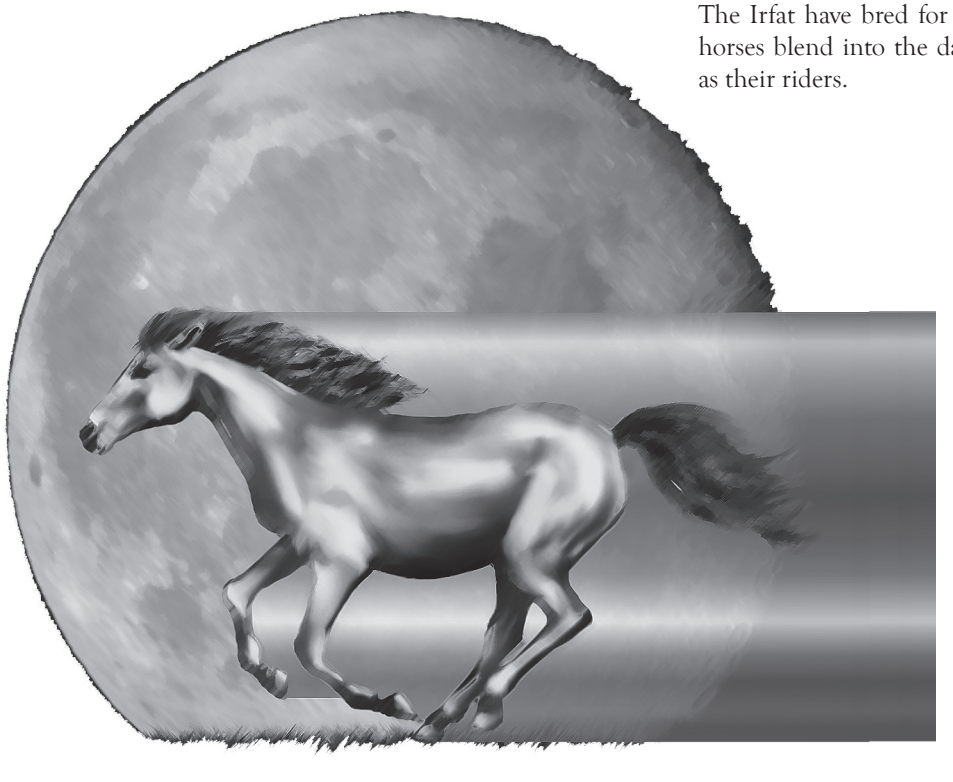
The Bortai and the Sufz are respected as warriors by the Irfat and they are always welcome in the camps and fires of the Irfat. Likewise, the Irfat respect the Leron for their prowess in combat and their steadfast devotion to the people. The Irfat find the Zah meddlesome but respect their connection with both the gods and the land. The Briela are held in esteem by the Irfat, but are not traditional allies. The Briela way of life is just to alien to the Irfat for a close connection between the tribes. This dismay is mutual.

RIDERS of HAK

Peshwah na-Jota am-Irfat bri Afwa is the Sirk am-Peshwah. In his early fifties, Jota has seen the coming of the Afridhi and the decline of his tribe. Jota is devout. Jota is powerfully built and has just begun to show the signs of his age. Jota is also a tactical mastermind, having developed a system of reconnaissance and observation that has kept a close eye on the Afridhi and protected the Peshwah from the worst of their potential depredations. Jota personally slew the chief assassin that came for Raelralataen on the night the Cult of Calelrin attacked. He is a ranger of unparalleled skill and a war leader of fearsome prowess. He has also seen his own death in a Zah guided vision quest and is grim and fatalistic.

Peshwah na-Kinu is her father's opposite and shares Jota's deep blues eyes and good looks if not his disposition. She is a kijiru of the Irfat and has decided that if her people are to vanish in flesh, they will live on in verse and song. Kinu travels across the High Hak and the Eastern Hak sharing stories of the Irfat and assessing the mettle and skills of the tribes. All she sees she shares with her father. In many ways, Kinu is the eyes and ears of the Sirk.

Peshwah na-Hadarsh am-Irfat is both respected and feared by the Peshwah. He is known among the people for his ruthlessness. Over five hundred Afridhi scalps adorn the central post of his tent. He is an assassin and like many of the Irfat that have chosen this path, uses his dark skills for the defense of the Peshwah. He has a distaste for outlanders of all sorts and there have been several Blackmoorans slain at his hands for offenses both real and imagined.



Rites and Rituals

The Irfat swear oaths in the name of Raelralataen and usually bind the oath in blood. Irfat warriors must be able to take a horse bond, and those not able to usually seek out Peshwan na-Kurell in High Tenlish. The Irfat hold a funeral for members of their tribe who are not able to bond with a horse. Young Irfat just into their horsebond are not considered true members of the tribe until they have taken an Afridhi by surprise. The Irfat say, even a bumbling Thonian can strike down an Afridhi. Only Peshwah can bring him death that he never sees.

The Irfat only marry for love now, although their practices were similar to the Faleem. In the current day, the Irfat only marry when it is apparent that the Irfat in question must leave the tribe to find completeness or if the Irfat in question finds someone who is willing to give up their family and herds to fight the bloody and fatal fight of the Irfat.

Weapons and Horses

The Irfat favor two weapons and commonly fight with a brace of short swords. Double weapons are also favored by martial Irfat and the Arbir is a particular favorite. Irfat archers use the short composite bow and prefer to snipe from horseback. Spider silk armor is the preferred armor of all Irfat, although they will wear chain mail or breast plate in its various permutations if the time is right. The Irfat are hardened and experienced and over 100 of their number are 8th level or above in their chosen professions.

Irfat horses are bred for intelligence and alertness. The Irfat want quick horses that are as sneaky and cunning as they are. The Irfat have bred for black horses for generations. Their horses blend into the darkness of night with the same skill as their riders.

The Leron

Population: 500 adults. 315 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 900 horses, 600 goats, 40 oxen.
Horses: Steel gray and often rose gray, with mixed red and brown points.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Bortai, Sufz, Adiel, Briela, Ornidri, Zah. Current: Bortai, Sufz, Ornidri, Zah.

Lands and History

The Leron consider themselves guardians of the valley of the ancients. Many ages ago, when a great star fell and shattered on the land in the region now called the Valley of the Ancients, the Leron Clan was the first to investigate the matter. More than half of the tribe vanished in one day when contact was made with the fallen star and the strange and bizarre magics that surrounded it. Since that day, the Leron have stood a lonely vigil, patrolling the passes and entrances to the Valley and warning off any who would enter, and killing those who will not listen and insist on passage. The Leron fear what dwells within the Valley and what might be released by the uninitiated.

The Leron constantly search the Valley of the Ancients, sending small bands into the territory. The Valley is littered with many foul beasts, ancient magics, and arcane sites. As a result, the Leron have more than their fair share of magical gear. This booty is usually shared with the rest of the Peshwah. Some choice times, or items deemed too dangerous for general consumption, are kept by the Hommett of the Leron. The Leron are very conscious of the needs of the Peshwah in the war against the Afridhi and scavenge what metal they can, occasionally raiding the mines of the fire giants of the valley to recover iron and steel for the rest of the Peshwah.

The might of the Leron comes from the Dragon Knights in their ranks. The Shilotan are the most able and competent of the Leron. Their association with their fellow Dragon Knights has yet to bring them into conflict with the rest of the Peshwah. Rumor whispered around Peshwah campfires ties the rise of the Shilotan in the Leron to the cataclysmic creation of the Valley of the Ancients. The emergence of the other Dragon Knights of the north is, according to many Peshwah, tied to this same event, and all of the Dragon Knights share some concern over the Valley and what dwells within it. The Leron and their Shilotan seem to be the only appointed guardians of the passes into the Valley. Whether or not this is true or just idle speculation, is supposedly known with certainty by the Shilotan of the Leron. They respond to questions on this issue with a cold and distant stare.

The Leron Shilotan usually bond with suits of light armor, with spider silk being common. The lance is often the favored weapon, although the bullova and other axes are also common choices.

The Leron have not been the most popular tribe since the coming of the Afridhi. While they have been supportive, the Leron have consistently held a percentage of their riders in reserve. When open war waged on the Plains of Hak, the Leron never reduced their patrols of the Valley of the Ancients and consequently did not keep a force on par with the other tribes in battle. Leron casualties as a percentage of their population were not as heavy too.

To the Leron, this made perfect sense as their vigil is timeless and cannot be disrupted by the current political crisis. The Leron do not see the Afridhi as the great enemy of legend. They believe they stand ready to defend against the great enemy when it emerges for the Valley.

Leron tribesmen worship Hak and Raelralataen and at one time had very many pious worshippers of Hadeen in their number. Paladins exist in great number among the Leron. Ranger is also very common as the Leron are constantly moving through and around the valley. The Leron keep a mix of heavy and light cavalry, and use their light cavalry as bait to draw opponents into their heavy cavalry's charge range. The Leron live as the ancestors did, keeping several small moving camps. They patrol from the spring at Farah to the passes into the Valley. The northern entrances to the valley also receive their attention through patrol.

Politics

The Zah understand the Leron the best of all the tribes and give them their support. The mystics of the Zah have cast back the veil of time and glimpsed the distant past and the ties that bind the Leron to the Valley of the Ancients. They support the Leron in their self-imposed relative isolation and will marry their daughters into the tribe to help strengthen its ranks.

The Bortai and the Sufz understand the hazards within the valley and have helped the Leron deal with rampaging giants and the dragons that sometimes strike out against them. The Bortai understand that the Leron are sky wise and aware of a different type of danger. The Bortai alone have stood up during the Camberi and protested complaints they saw as unfair against the Leron. The Sufz support the Leron in their way, fostering their sons to the Leron in penance for the murder of the Twelve Prophets.

The Ornidri share the northern border with the Leron and have always had the support they needed from them. The Ornidri have had interaction with the Shilotan of the north and of the Leron and respect them. The Ornidri say that if a Shilotan says a thing, the Shilotan believes it with his whole heart. The Leron have fought beside the Ornidri on many occasions, whether that be raiding the swamps of Blackmoor for horses or hunting Wyvern's in the Wyvern Hills. Respect between the two tribes has been earned.

The Somhak and the Irfat share a disdain for the Leron. To their way of thinking, the Leron have let the Peshwah struggle without their support. While no Peshwah will declare outright hatred for another, both of these tribes bear the Leron little love. The Briela also think the Leron are missing their moment in history. To the Briela, the Bow of Hadeen is finally within the grasp of the people. That the Leron have not thrown in their whole heart in support of this task is beyond the Briela.

The Qulaam and the Peshneath guard the western border of the Hak and believe the Leron are distracted by the wrong foes. They would have the Leron spends less time searching for booty within the Valley and more time on the plains hunting Afridhi.

The Adiel and Faleem understand the obsession of the Leron, but have both openly said the Leron should reconsider the force they have deployed in support of the Irfat and Naktok.

Peshwah na-Shilotan Moraine am-Leron leads the Leron from the venerable perch of sixty-five winters. A paladin of Hadeen before the god fell, he has found solace in the service of Raelralataen, these last twenty-odd years since the god was lost to the people. Moraine knows that the Afridhi are a menace. However, he also knows what waits within the valley and cannot abandon the long vigil. He supports the other tribes as he is able. He plays politics with the other leado. He guards the long watch.

Peshwah na-Shilotan Abidai is the greatest hunter among the people. His haksoja is famous for the items they have brought home to the people. He fights with a flaming sword made of pure light that ignores the armor of his enemies. His haksoja also possesses many other fantastic items of power, all brought back from the valley of the Ancients.

The Hommett of the Leron is Peshwah na-Narvu. She is a druid of Yoosef and known throughout the Peshwah for the magic she works in the god's name. She is also known for her militant nature, having come to the aid of the forces of Naktok on more then one occasion. To non-Leron, it appears she comes when the rest of the Leron will not. She knows she comes because the other Leron cannot.

Rites and Rituals

The Leron horse bond at an early age. Leron unable to band are not exiled from the tribe. Many become arcane casters or follow the way of the druid instead. Leron youth travel and begin their duties on patrol as soon as they are able to ride, often guarding the spare horses while the senior members of the warband do reconnaissance or actually raid.

Leron marriages are arranged between families. The Leron occasionally marry for love and this is the source of much of their poetry.

Weapons and Horses

The Leron prefer the lance above all other weapons. After the lance, they favor the greatsword. The Leron are very comfortable in rough and mountainous terrain and have no problem leading their horses as opposed to riding them.

The horses of the Leron are nimble and agile. Many say they are half mountain goat. Truthfully, the Leron have bred for agility above all other traits and the chargers of the Leron reflect this.

The Ornidri

Population: 450 adults. 280 men and women are capable combatants
Herds: 800 horses, 400 goats, 140 oxen, 1,200 hounds
Horses: Golden palomino
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Leron, Qulaam, Somhak, Irfat, Peshneath. Current: Leron, Qulaam, Somhak, Irfat, Peshneath.

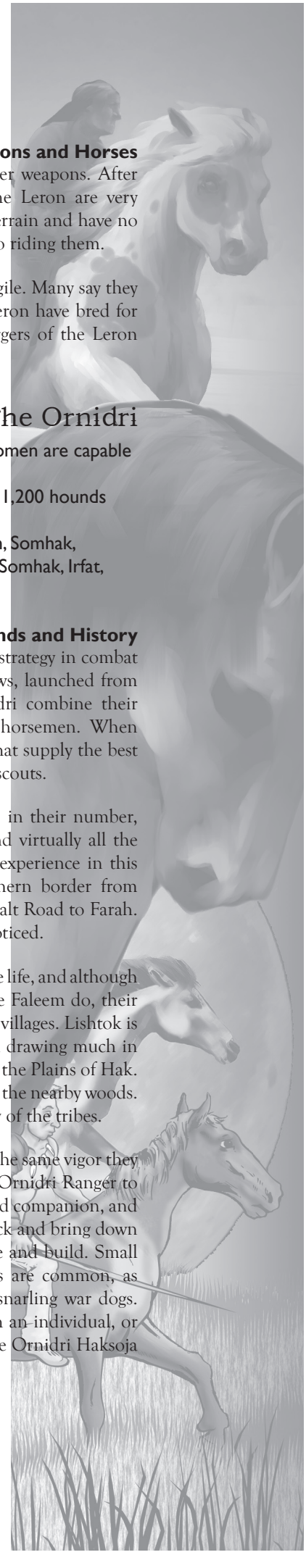
Lands and History

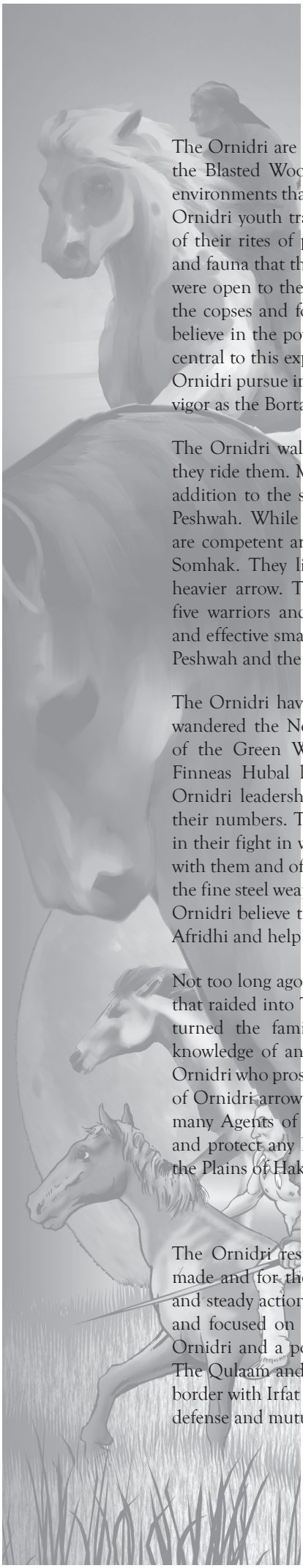
The Ornidri are masterful archers. Their strategy in combat is built around the whoosh of many arrows, launched from positions of unseen ambush. The Ornidri combine their skill with archery, with superb skills as horsemen. When the Peshwah go to war, it is the Ornidri that supply the best archers, and, the most adept trackers and scouts.

While the other horse clans have rangers in their number, the Ornidri see themselves as rangers, and virtually all the martial members of the tribe have some experience in this profession. The Ornidri guard the northern border from Lishtok to Dawlish. They also patrol the Salt Road to Farah. Very little makes it past their patrols un-noticed.

The Ornidri have settled steadily into village life, and although they do not have cities in the way that the Faleem do, their Dawlish and Lishtok are permanent, fixed villages. Lishtok is also a fortified stockade, with the Ornidri drawing much in design from the Afridhi forts that now dot the Plains of Hak. The Ornidri breed goats and graze them in the nearby woods. Their cheese has become a stable for many of the tribes.

The Ornidri keep and breed hounds with the same vigor they breed horses. It is not uncommon for an Ornidri Ranger to travel with his bonded horse, his war hound companion, and a pack of dogs he has bred to help him track and bring down an opponent. Ornidri hounds vary in size and build. Small light, long legged and long-eared trackers are common, as are ferocious three foot at the shoulder, snarling war dogs. The Ornidri fight and move in packs with an individual, or a small group of rangers, at the center. The Ornidri Haksoja includes more animals than Peshwah.





The Ornidri are masters of the Woods of the Revenant and the Blasted Woods and are more comfortable in arboreal environments than any of the other tribes save the Peshneath. Ornidri youth travel far and wide across the North, as part of their rites of passage, looking for rare examples of flora and fauna that they can bring back. When the Plains of Hak were open to the Peshwah, it was the Ornidri who haunted the copses and forests that littered the Plains. The Ornidri believe in the power of the journey to transform a soul and central to this experience are long walks upon the land. The Ornidri pursue immortality in the haksojacaru with the same vigor as the Bortai.

The Ornidri walk and run beside their horses as much as they ride them. Many Ornidri carry long composite bows in addition to the short composite bows common among the Peshwah. While they will fight from horseback and many are competent archers from this platform, they are not the Somhak. They like longer bows with greater range and a heavier arrow. The Ornidri arrange themselves in fists of five warriors and quivers of four fists. Their organization and effective small unit tactics are well-respected by both the Peshwah and the northerners who have fought with them.

The Ornidri have made many friends and contacts as they wandered the North. Chief among them are the Brothers of the Green Wood and the refugees from Ten. Baron Finneas Hubal has successfully befriended several of the Ornidri leadership and his Trees have several Peshwah in their numbers. The Ornidri support the refugees from Ten in their fight in whatever ways they can, sharing intelligence with them and often trading spider silk armor and horses for the fine steel weapons that the Brother's have access too. The Ornidri believe that the Brothers are a fine tool against the Afridhi and help them any way they can.

Not too long ago, it was the Ornidri, the Irfat and the Adiel that raided into Ten to steal horses and goods. The Ornidri turned the familiarity of the raider into the reciprocal knowledge of an ally. When Ten is retaken, it will be the Ornidri who prosper the most among the Peshwah. The crack of Ornidri arrows slamming into Afridhi flesh is something many Agents of the Brothers cherish. The Ornidri absorb and protect any Brothers who are forced to flee south into the Plains of Hak, staging daring rescues.

Politics

The Ornidri respect the Irfat for the sacrifices they have made and for their tactical acumen. Likewise, the constant and steady actions of the Somhak to keep the tribes unified and focused on a common goal, is deeply admired by the Ornidri and a political issue they support whole heartedly. The Qulaam and the Ornidri work closely in defense of the border with Irfat and their alliance has long been focused on defense and mutual support.

The Peshneath and the Ornidri both share a love of green and wooded spaces, although the Peshneath are quite a bit more specialized than their cousins. The Ornidri feed the Peshneath a constant supply of metal and wood-crafted items. The Peshneath, in return provide a constant supply of spider silk armor, which the Ornidri feed into the North.

The Leron and the Ornidri share defense of a border, but more importantly, an understanding of the Blackmoorans and Tenians to the north. The Dragon Knights of the Leron have the absolute respect of the Ornidri and their support of the Ornidri dealing with incursions on the northern border has helped make a long-term and steady alliance between the two tribes. Further, many of the northerners known to the Ornidri are known to the Leron.

The Adiel, Sufz and the Bortai, see the Ordnidri's lifestyle as un-Peshwah, and their disdain is evident. The Ornidri point to the Afridhi scalps they keep, and to the trophies they bring back, and respond to such crass criticism with wry wit and martial competence. The Ornidri have changed their lifestyle to defend the High Hak and find criticism of their way of life offensive.

The Faleem and the Ornidri compete in trade. While the Faleem are more expert merchants, the Ornidri have secured access to steel and are competition to the Faleem on this front. There is little love lost between the two tribes. The Briela and the Ornidri support each other as Peshwah, but share no historic interaction. While both tribes respect each other as Peshwah, they do not traditionally intermarry. The Zah and the Ornidri do not get along. The Zah do not like the alliances that the Ornidri have built outside of the Peshwah and see them as a potential source of conflict for the Peshwah down the road.

The leado of the Ornidri is Peshwah na-Bida, a young warrior of just thirty-two summers. His Irfat wife, Peshwah na-Kifu, travels with him at all times and their children have been raised by the women of Dawlish. These two are known throughout the Peshwah for their love for each other and also their accuracy with a bow. Last spring during a raid, the pair shot the eyes out of an Afridhi priestess as she prepared to summon some foul beast. Kifu called her right eye. Bida called her left. Peshwah na-Bida rose to power on political acumen and martial prowess. His wife is kinsmen of the Sirk, and his family has brought many leado to the Ornidri. Bida supports the Sirk and works aggressively to damage and harm the Afridhi.

Peshwah na-Zobnu am-Ornidri is a member of the Brothers of the Green Wood and also a respected Ornidri ranger. He has lead many expeditions against the Afridhi in support of the Brothers. Most often, his goal is to distract the Afridhi so that some other mission encounters less resistance. Just as often, however, it is Zobnu and his haksoja that lead some Brother across the plains and to the safety of Peshwah land.

Rites and Rituals

The Ornidri can all take horse bonds. Occasionally, an Ornidri chooses not to in the pursuit of arcane arts. The Ornidri do not support marriage for those who choose this, but do not exile them from the clan either. They may or may not stay in the horse bond their entire lives. This is a personal decision. Often the grief over the loss of their horse makes the thought of a new bond unbearable. The Ornidri have very many wokan in their numbers. The Ornidri marry for love, but will usually have the parents of the interested party begin negotiations with the other family, as many of their allied tribes are more restrictive than they on this issue.

Weapons and Horses

The Ornidri breed palominos with golden coats and blonde manes, tails and forelocks. Their horses are bred to be sturdy combatants as they often fight side by side with the Ornidri in many different environments.

The Ornidri favor the bow, and many carry both the long and short composite bow to have the broadest possible array of tactical options. The Ornidri usually use battle axes or great axes as back up weapons.

The Peshneath

Population: 425 adults. 230 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 600 horses, 400 goats, 140 oxen, domesticated spiders.
Horses: Dark bay with white facial markings and stockings.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Qulaam, Ornidri, Faleem, Briela. Current: Qulaam, Ornidri, Faleem, Somhak.

Lands and History

The Peshneath have devoted their tribe to a craft. They make the spider silk armor that the Peshwah are known for and that helps them pass through the grass like smoke. They dwell in and around Chumlish Penarth, "Overlook" in the tongue of the barbarians, in the hills overlooking the Neath Forest and the Plains of Hak beyond. The Peshneath are guardians of this section of the border. More than that, however, they see themselves as the guardians of each Peshwah warrior.

The Peshneath have fully surrendered the hunter-gatherer life and instead live in their fortified village perfecting their craft and making weapons and armor of every type. The Peshneath are devout followers of Yoosef and their pursuit of knowledge and technological excellence reflect the presence of this god in their culture and the change their society faces.

The Peshneath are adept hunters and trackers, making their living harvesting silk from webs and egg sacks of the Neath Forest spiders. This is for the faint at heart. The Peshneath have a reputation for placid calm in difficult situations.

The Peshneath keep a constant presence in the Neath Forest and are true masters of this domain. The spider populations are a carefully husbanded resource, and the Peshneath function as both harvester and guardian. No one, not even other Peshwah, enters the forest without their permission.

The Peshneath have begun the successful domestication of some smaller varieties of Neath spiders, increasing their armor production as a result. Likewise, they are becoming adept at distilling toxins from captured spiders, coating more and more Peshwah arrows. Many of the Peshneath's greatest hunters have made themselves immune to all but the most lethal venoms through alchemical experimentation.

The Peshneath keep a wary eye on their border and patrol aggressively, supporting the Qulaam on the river. The Peshneath take prisoners to extract information from those that fall into their hands with the same brutal precision they strip a spider carcass down to its most useful parts.

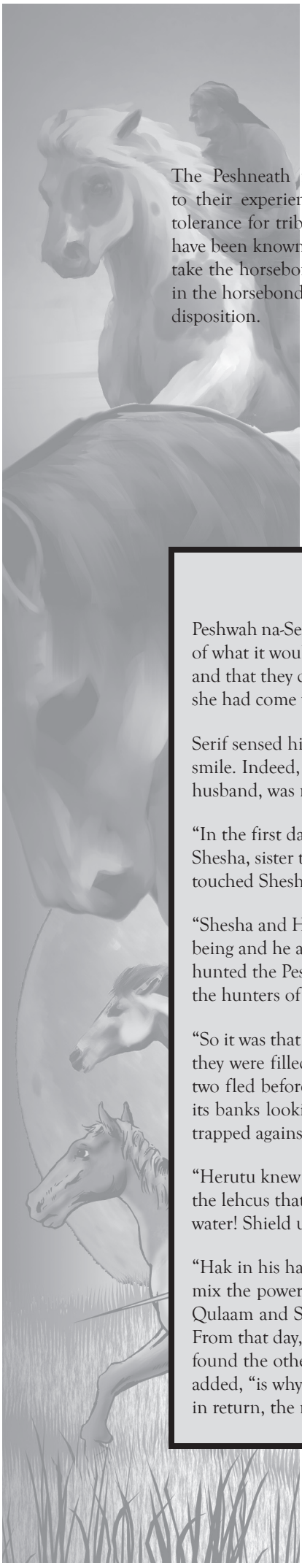
Politics

The Peshneath maintain excellent terms with the Faleem and the two intermarry freely. Likewise, the Qulaam are traditional and strong allies. They two tribes have shared fire and hearth for as long as they have swum the river. The Ornidri and Peshneath are nearly the same point in their social evolution and share a familiarity and understanding of wooded spaces. The young marry between these tribes easily. The Briela have the deep and abiding respect of the Peshneath and the Peshneath support them in every way they can on their great quest. The Somhak have become much closer to the Peshneath since the death of Hadeen, as the Somhak call for unity strikes a deep chord in them.

The Irfat, Adiel, Sufz, Leron and Bortai all need what the Peshneath make, but the Peshneath live a lifestyle alien to them. The Peshneath live in their mountains and work in the Neath Forest and that is enough for these tribes. The Zah have the respect of the Peshneath.

Peshwah na-Owan is the current leado. Owan is a politician first and works constantly to improve his position within his tribe, to protect the interests of the Peshneath. It nettles his pride that the work the Peshneath do is so central to the safety of the Peshwah, but valued so little by traditional tribes. He is vocal on this issue. In his mid-forties, Owan has seen the coming of the Afridhi and believes that constant adaptation and change are necessary for the Peshwah to survive.

The Hommett of the Peshneath is Peshwah na-Curnu, a cleric and priest of Yoosef. He believes the Peshneath have been shown a specific path. He preaches that the Peshneath have a sacred duty to arm and equip the Peshwah and they have been placed in that role because they, among the tribes, have the discipline and intelligence to accomplish this task. Curnu is not overly popular outside of his tribe.



Rites and Rituals

The Peshneath marry for love, and courtship is central to their experience at the Camberi. They have very little tolerance for tribes that force marriages on their young and have been known to start duels on this issue. The Peshneath take the horsebond at an early age and may or may not stay in the horsebond throughout their lives, depending on their disposition.

Weapons and Horses

The Peshneath prefer the Arbir above all weapons and their rangers are very adept with it. The Peshneath are also accomplished archers. The Peshneath cultivate stealth and prefer attacking from surprise. Very many of their warriors derive benefits from this strategy and are adept at placing their blows well when an opponent is surprised. The Peshneath also fight with nets woven of spider silk and many an Afridhi raider has died in their webs, entangled as the blades of their Arbir smote him.

Peshneath horses are a dark bay with white markings on muzzle and legs. Peshneath horses are routinely bred for rugged constitution so they can resist the occasional spider bite or exposure to toxin.

How Herutu Saved Shesha

Peshwah na-Serif am-Qulaam held his new wife's hand. She trembled. Quis was Faleem and her head filled with odd tales of what it would be like live among the Peshlyn, the river people. She had heard that the Qulaam slept in pools of water and that they drank the blood of any they defeated in combat. She had come here to secure trade with the Qulaam, and she had come willingly, but she was terrified.

Serif sensed his new bride's fear. "Have you heard the tale of Herutu, and how he saved his horse?" he asked her with a smile. Indeed, Quis had heard the story, all Peshwah had, but to hear it straight from the mouth of a Qulaam, and her husband, was new to her. "I have, but please husband, tell me," she said.

"In the first days of the people," Serif began, "Herutu of the firstborn walked the land. His companion of his heart was Shesha, sister to the first horse and the most beautiful of all her kind. It is said the Mother wind cried each time the sun touched Shesha for her beauty was beyond compare.

"Shesha and Herutu sought visions together and rode the land alone. Herutu's heart sought an answer to the why of his being and he and Shesha searched the Hak for that which would give their life meaning. In those days, the men of Odir hunted the Peshwah and their horses. The Peshwah had not learned the mastery of steel or the craft of war, and evaded the hunters of Peshwah and Peshleh though guile and cunning.

"So it was that Herutu and Shesha found themselves pursued by the children of Odir. When their eyes fell upon Shesha, they were filled with the lust that only the Lehcus can know when they see a horse perfect in its form. Many days the two fled before their enemies, until the found themselves before the Root River and closely followed. They fled along its banks looking for a place to ford. Alas, there was no safe place for them to cross, and soon they found themselves trapped against the fast flowing river.

"Herutu knew anguish. He knew that they could not cross the high waters. He knew that they would die at the hands of the lehcus that pursued them. 'Oh mighty Hak,' he called out. 'Save your son and daughter! Make us one with brother water! Shield us from the wrath of the lehcus and let not your most perfect Peshleh end her days as a thrall!'

"Hak in his halls heard Herutu's prayer. He and Mother Wind asked Sister Water for a boon. Sister Water said, "Let us mix the power of my blood with theirs and see what salvation they may find." So it was done and Herutu, first of the Qulaam and Shesha, first of the Peshlehla, or dire weasels, were filled with the spirit of Sister Water and transformed. From that day, Herutu and all his descendents kept to the sacred water of the Root and Shesha and all that followed her found the other Peshlehla of the river and filled them with the spirit of Hak." Serif smiled as his bride. "And that," he added, "is why you have nothing to fear. We are Peshwah and trace our blood back to the first sons of Hak." She smiled in return, the myth of her childhood given flesh in her new husband.

The Qulaam

Population: 300 adults. 170 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 425 dire weasels, 200 goats, 30 oxen.
Horses: Bond with dire weasels, can bond with horses.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Peshneath, Ornidri, Faleem, Irfat. Current: Peshneath, Ornidri, Faleem, Irfat

Lands and History

The Qulaam are fishermen and hunters who guard the Root River from its headwaters to the swamp near South Port. This river is sacred to the Qulaam, and to all the Peshwah. The Qulaami call themselves the Peshlyn, or river people. The life of the Qulaam is centered around Lyntok, the river gate, from where they patrol and organize their defense of the western border. If the mountains are the walls of the castle that is the High Hak, the Root River is its moat. The Qulaam guard that moat. As a result, Swim and Profession: Sailor are class skills for all Qulaami. The Qulaami use canoes and small, shallow skiffs to travel up and down the Root river.

Lyntok is a fortified village and the center of Qulaam life. Lyntok draws its design directly from nature and is flooded. Many of the Qulaam residences are above water on stilts. Just as many are clustered like Beaver mounds with entrances below the water. It is the most accessible of the Peshwah towns for the Afridhi but it has proven impossible for the Afridhi to overrun. Both times the Afridhi have attacked the town their losses have been catastrophic. However, the Qulaam are still recovering from the last raid six years ago. Although two thousand Afridhi perished that day, so did 128 Qulaam warriors. The Peshwah can ill afford victories such as these.

The Qulaam do not like non-Peshwah and are nearly as xenophobic as the Adiel. Qulaam who trade at Su Abu Sinj are quite likely to soak non-Peshwah for every copper they can. The Qulaam are brutal when they take prisoners and have been known to let their dire weasels work over prisoners.

There is a savage streak to many Qulaam that may be a result of their bonded mounts. Qulaam are known as vicious in a fight and barbarian is a common class among Qulaam warriors. Qulaam very seldom fight from the backs of their dire weasels and usually only ride them in the water. In combat, a Qulaam and his mount will work together to flank and very many Qulaam take levels of rogue to take advantage of that. Qulaami can bond with horses, although they usually only do so when they are married into another clan.

The Qulaam do not range far from the sacred waters of the root for several reasons. Foremost is that it takes the full adult population to keep this border secure. Additionally, they are ill-suited for most non-aquatic environments and know that. Finally, they do not like non-Peshwah and find other peoples annoying.

Politics

The Qulaam consider the Irfat their best allies and have tremendous respect for them. To the Qulaam it has been Irfat tactical acumen that has held the Peshwah together. The Somhak, on the other hand, appear to be self-serving and overtly political to the Qulaam.

The Ornidri and the Peshneath share the duty of holding the border against the Afridhi. Because of this, these tribes share a common approach to things and usually present themselves as a block on issues related to defense of the Hak. The Faleem have been long-term supporters of the Qulaam and both tribes have wintered on the plateau since the dawning of the tribes. Their alliance is as more a matter of tradition than ideological compatibility.

The Bortai, Sufz, Leron and Adiel all find the bonded mounts of the Qulaam distasteful and the Adiel in particular are ill at ease around Qulaami. The Zah see them as Peshwah who were saved directly by Hak's intervention. They tolerate and respect all that the Qulaam do. The Qulaam hold the Briela in disdain and view them as self-absorbed. The Briela are less aggressive in their condemnation but have said on several occasions that the Qulaam are ignorant and spiritually tone deaf. The other Peshwah—the Irfat and the Somhak—do what they can to ameliorate the conflict.

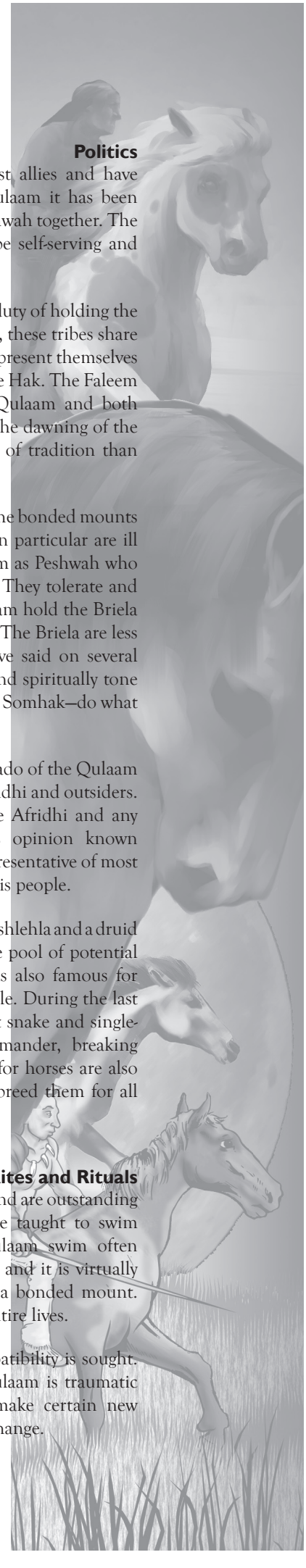
Peshwah na-Wazuyi (wah-ZOO-ye) is the leado of the Qulaam and a fanatic in all issues related to the Afridhi and outsiders. He sees very little difference between the Afridhi and any other non-Peshwah and he makes this opinion known whenever asked. Wazuyi's attitudes are representative of most of the Qulaam and he is popular among his people.

Peshwah na-Seethu is the chief breeder of Peshlehla and a druid of Hak. She is responsible for keeping the pool of potential bond mates diverse and strong. Seethu is also famous for the forms she takes in defense of the people. During the last assault by the Afridhi, she became a giant snake and single-handedly slew the Afridhi cavalry commander, breaking their assault. The same options available for horses are also available for the Peshlehla, and Qulaam breed them for all sorts of characteristics.

Rites and Rituals

The Qulaam literally grow up on the river and are outstanding swimmers and sailors. Qulaam youth are taught to swim and steer boats early in their lives. Qulaam swim often and constantly with their family's weasels and it is virtually unheard of for a Qulaam to be without a bonded mount. Qulaam stay in bonds throughout their entire lives.

Marriage is arranged by parents but compatibility is sought. For most Peshwah, marrying into the Qulaam is traumatic and the Qulaam learned long ago to make certain new spouses are willing and accepting of this change.



Weapons and Mounts

The Qulaam use harpoons, lances and other pole arms. Many Qulaam are also proficient with the bow, although this weapon is generally only used in defense of Lyntok. The Qulaam generally carry quivers of javelins with them. Qulaam wear very little traditional armor, although they will wear spider silk.

The Dire Weasels of the Qulaam are bred for many different functions. One in ten is much larger than his peers and advanced in hit dice to large size. These creatures are the culmination of years of breeding by the Qulaam and ridden by their most fearsome warriors.

The Somhak

Population: 625 adults. 430 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 1,500 horses, 150 goats, 150 oxen, 3,000 grazers.
Horses: Chestnut and sorrel, some roans.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Zah, Irfat, Ornidri, Faleem, Briela, Bortai. Current: Zah, Ornidri, Briela, Bortai, Peshneath, Sufz.



Lands and History

The Somhak are the clan from which Hadeen ascended and also which came the first Hommett. These two issues define the Somhak and have shaped their world view and the way they are defined among the Peshwah. The death of Hadeen is a mark of shame and sorrow for the clan, and the Somhak bear a stigma as a result. The Somhak have long been the leaders of the Peshwah, and even when the title of Sirk is not clearly draped over the shoulders of their leado, the Somhak behave as if they lead with a clear mandate to do so. Often this manifests as arrogance, but just as often, it manifests as competence. Where the Irfat are tactical masters, the Somhak are *strategic* masters. The problems of the Peshwah are self-evident and the Somhak have the answer. The tribes must be unified under one leader and surrender their autonomy.

The Somhak are the keepers of Sul Peshwan, the Seat of the People. Their territory is the ring of land directly surrounding Sul Peshwan, and they graze their herds from Sul Peshwan to the Neath. Long ago, when the tribes first formed and the Peshwah no longer traveled together as one people, the tribes began to skirmish and war with one another. At that time, Hadeen was the leado of the Somhak and the voice of his tribe. Hadeen, peacemaker, held the Somhak back from the conflicts of the warring tribes and counseled all who would listen to lay down arms. Peshwah should not slay Peshwah. Few heeded his advice and full blown war raged across the High Hak with only the Zah and the Somhak refusing to choose a side. Hadeen asked Hak for help is ending the strife, sacrificing 20 grazers in the god's name. Hak answered with storm of fearsome power. Winter came upon the Hak, when early autumn was the season.

The tribes fell back to the ring of seven hills that was to become Sul Peshwan, seeking shelter from the storm. It was Hadeen and the Somhak who met them there and shared the mead, milk and meat they had stored for the coming winter. In that winter, Hadeen brokered peace among the tribes, and became the first Sirk of the Peshwah. From that day, Sul Peshwan has become the site of interclan trade and commerce as well as the place of formal meeting. Also from that meeting, sprang the formal agreement to intermarry among the tribes. Hadeen brought peace and laid the groundwork for peace from that day forward. Although the Peshwah tribes are different and each has their own identity, they also are tied closely together. Much of what composes the Shia am-Caru Shada comes from the Somhak. Each year, the Camberi is held at Sul Peshwan.

While the Briela are the diplomats and negotiators foreigners think of outside of the lands of the Peshwah, it is the Somhak who resolve conflict between the clans and often oversee conflicts involving outlanders. The Somhak speak with the authority of Hadeen and of Hak, and their Hommett have long acted as diplomats among the Peshwah, and often with those who find themselves at odds with the Peshwah.

The Somhak practice Yoosef's principle of tolerance, "All is under Hak's vision; All drink of Mother Wind; All have a place under the sky; In knowing another, you come to better know yourself." To say, however, that the Somhak are tolerant is a misstatement. To say they are earnest in their desire to understand the thinking and motivations of others is more accurate and this is a trait they share with the Bortai.

The Somhak have had a difficult time since the death of Hadeen. Several of the tribes blame them for his loss. This has made it very difficult for Somhak to perform their traditional role of interclan moderator and judge. Further, the Hommett of the Somhak were composed in equal parts of worshippers of Hadeen and Hak. The worshippers of Hadeen have all migrated to Raelralataen or Hak and the tribe was diminished as a result. It has been the historic duty of the Hommett of the Somhak to meet with outsiders who seek out the Peshwah on the High Hak to determine their intentions and purposes. Likewise it has always been the Somhak Hommett who convene the Hommett of the other tribes during the Camberi to resolve conflicts and help coordinate marriages. The Somhak have had a harder and harder time holding this authority.

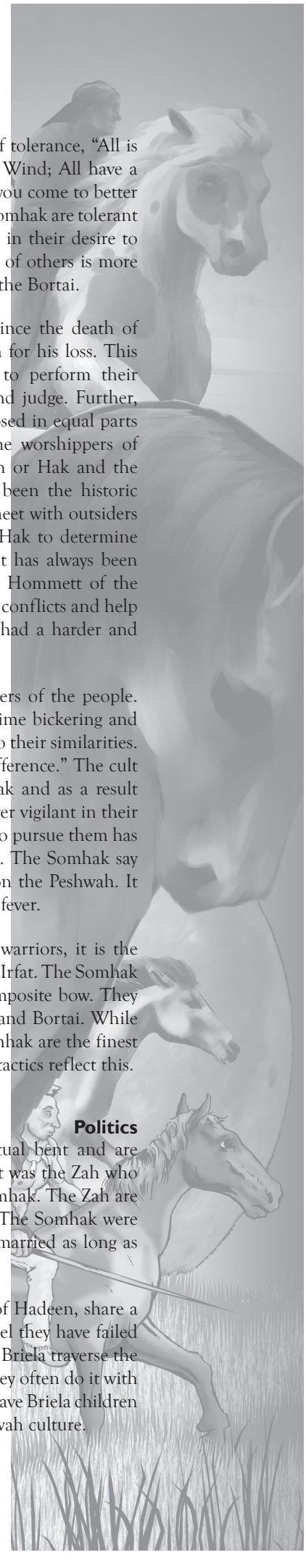
The Somhak view themselves as the leaders of the people. They believe the tribes spend too much time bickering and focused on minor differences as opposed to their similarities. The Somhak say, "Calelrin lives in our difference." The cult of Calelrin has often targeted the Somhak and as a result the Hommett of the Somhak have been ever vigilant in their attempts to root out cultists. Their ability to pursue them has been curtailed since the death of Hadeen. The Somhak say the death of Hadeen is like a wound upon the Peshwah. It weakens them and makes them burn with fever.

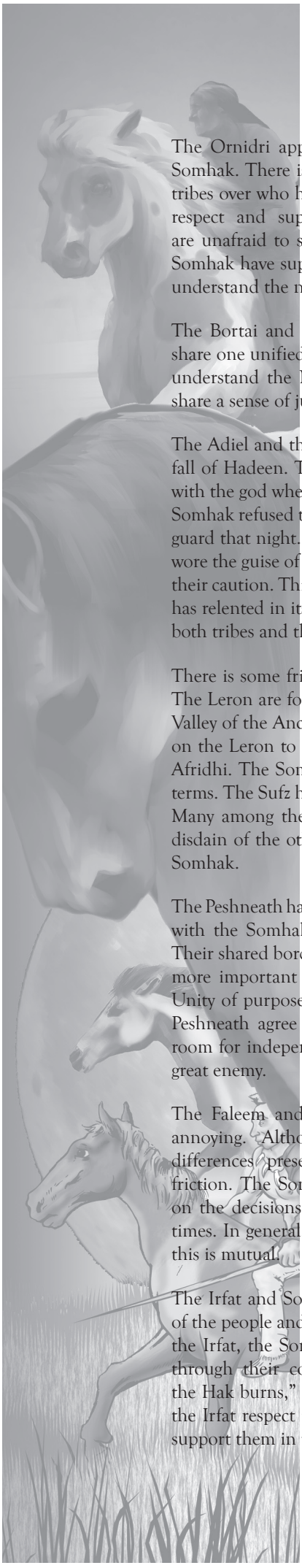
In the last, each time there is a call for warriors, it is the Somhak who come with the Bortai and the Irfat. The Somhak are horse archers, and favor the short composite bow. They are the hammer to the anvil of the Adiel and Bortai. While the Ornidri are the finest archers, the Somhak are the finest shot from horseback. Their tradition and tactics reflect this.

Politics

The Somhak and the Zah share a spiritual bent and are steadfast allies. When Hadeen was slain, it was the Zah who first stepped forward in defense of the Somhak. The Zah are the mystics and diviners of the Peshwah. The Somhak were the first priests. The two clans have intermarried as long as there have been clans.

The Briela, with their quest for the Bow of Hadeen, share a bond with the Somhak too. Both tribes feel they have failed Hadeen. As the sons and daughters of the Briela traverse the world searching for the Bow of Hadeen, they often do it with a Somhak spouse. Many Somhak families have Briela children fostered with them so they can learn Peshwah culture.





The Ornidri appreciate the tactics and disposition of the Somhak. There is a constant and steady rivalry between the tribes over who has the best archers. In the last, the Ornidri respect and support the Somhak because the Somhak are unafraid to say what needs to be said and because the Somhak have supported their contact with Ten. Both tribes understand the necessity of allies.

The Bortai and the Somhak agree that the Peshwah must share one unified and common goal and that they must also understand the Northerners. The Bortai and the Somhak share a sense of justice.

The Adiel and the Somhak have long been at odds over the fall of Hadeen. The Adiel and the Somhak were encamped with the god when he was slain. The Adiel maintain that the Somhak refused their assistance and would not let them keep guard that night. The Somhak point out that the murderers wore the guise of Adiel warriors and that they were correct in their caution. This schism hurts all the Peshwah. Neither side has relented in its stance these long years. It is a blight upon both tribes and the wisest among the Somhak know this.

There is some friction between the Somhak and the Leron. The Leron are focused on a specific task, their vigil over the Valley of the Ancients. The Somhak apply constant pressure on the Leron to contribute more to the defense against the Afridhi. The Somhak and the Sufz are on relatively neutral terms. The Sufz have not joined the criticism of the Somhak. Many among their number are aware of the effects of the disdain of the other tribes and have some sympathy for the Somhak.

The Peshneath have developed a better and better relationship with the Somhak since the exile from the Plains of Hak. Their shared border has had quite a bit to do with this. Even more important is the resonance of the Somhak message. Unity of purpose is central to their shared survival and the Peshneath agree with the Somhak that there is very little room for independent actions or agendas in the face of the great enemy.

The Faleem and Qulaam find the Somhak arrogant and annoying. Although the Somhak respect the cultural differences present in theses clans, there is occasional friction. The Somhak very aggressively state their opinions on the decisions of any clan. This has brought conflict at times. In general, both these tribes respect the Somhak and this is mutual.

The Irfat and Somhak are political rivals for the leadership of the people and the Irfat are in ascendance at this time. To the Irfat, the Somhak are weak and show their weaknesses through their constant chatter. "The Somhak talk while the Hak burns," is an Irfat critique of the sons of Hak. Still the Irfat respect the Somhak as warriors and as priests and support them in their pursuit of the Cult of Calelrin.

Peshwah na-Fetti is leado of the Somhak and has long aspired to be Sirk. This has eluded him to his frustration. Fetti is convinced that the Peshwah cannot stand alone against the Afridhi, and also is certain that the twelve tribes must be completely unified and focused on the destruction of the Peshwah or they will face obliteration. He has long sought the Bow of Hadeen, knowing that if it is found, the Peshwah will stand united. Fetti is a large man, solidly built, but running fat in his late forties. Fetti is a great archer and skilled rider. He was a young man when Hadeen was slain and rode in the god's Haksoja. The loss of the god wears heavily upon him.

Peshwah na-Sulla kafa Hadeen na, is the nephew of the Sirk. Sulla carries the title starborn of Hadeen among the Somhak, although this is contested by all save the Bortai and the Faleem. Sulla was conceived the night Hadeen was slain. On the day of his birth, sky metal plummeted to the earth near Sul Peshwan. Sulla carries a sword forged of this very steel. His father, Lenjo, was of the Zah and a paladin of Hadeen. His Mother, Arqua, could trace her blood line back to Hadeen himself and was a wokan of the Somhak. Those who have seen Hadeen when he walked among the Peshwah, quickly note that Sulla has the look of the god to him and that the resemblance is striking. Sulla has formed a haksoja of Peshwah and outlanders, all friends who saved him from an Afridhi raiding party. A competent ranger and skilled warrior, he rides the land seeking the Bow of Hadeen.

The chief Hommett of the Somhak is Peshwah na-Firuna bri Caseen, a priest of Hak. Firuna is a zealot in his pursuit of the Cult of Calelrin. He is known throughout the Peshwah for his tenacity in pursuit of cultists. During each Camberi, he presides over the meeting of the Hommett and has helped keep the Somhak at the spiritual center of the Peshwah, if not the political center. Twice in his life, the Cultists of Calelrin have attempted to murder Firuna. Each time he has overcome the attackers. Each time he has traced the attackers back to their tents of origin and purged the infestation. Once, Faleem bore the corruption of the deceiver. Once, it was the Bortai. Firuna preaches constant vigilance against the corruption of the deceiver.

Rites and Rituals

The Somhak marry for love, and will not force a marriage upon their children. The Somhak spend one week each winter in a fast in memory of Hadeen and his death. "Caru am-Hadeen" (blood of Hadeen) is their most common oath. The Somhak are great believers in the power of the quest to transform an individual. At least once in an adult's life, a Somhak will walk some part of the north seeking guidance from Hak himself.

The Pesh Briena-Leh is constant throughout the lives of the Somhak. The sons of Hak cannot imagine life without their horses and most Somhak progress deeper and deeper into the horse bond throughout their lives.

Weapons and Mounts

The Somhak are horse archers first and foremost. They favor the short composite bow above all other weapons. Many of the Somhak use swords and axes as back up weapons, often resorting to a prophet's shield or buckler as back up protection. The Somhak use the land to their advantage and will string a fight out over miles, peppering targets with arrows as they are pursued.

Somhak horses are chestnut, red like the caru kah, the blood wind that blows across the Hak in spring. Somhak horses are bred as combatants. The Somhak like durable and aggressive horses that can handle their own in combat and that move quickly. It is common for the Somhak to breed heavy steppes chargers that are as fast as their lighter cousins and that are fearsome in close combat.

The Sufz

Population: 550 adults. 390 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 1,800 horses, 6,000 grazers.
Horses: Bay roans, brown at head and hoof and grayish white on the torso.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Zah, Bortai and Leron. Current: Zah, Bortai, Leron, and Somhak.

Lands and History

The Sufz know that the life Hak has given them is the best life. They have little regard for outsiders or their ways and are nomadic, living in yurts and traveling with their herds across the eastern Hak. The Sufz live the way their ancestors did and take a great deal of pride in the purity of their relationship to the land. The herds of the Sufz are the largest of the Peshwah and their ability to manage such a free-ranging multitude truly a testimony to the skill both of their druids and their leadership.

The Sufz are devout. At the center of their identity is the murder of the dozen prophets at the hands of the Peshwah na-Kali Wa'zeen, the corrupt leado of the Sufz some 200 years ago. Kali presided over the murder of the Twelve Prophets, wokan and elderkin from each of the twelve tribes. Kali is a saint among the cultists of Calelrin. In one fell swoop he nearly cut the ties the Peshwah held to the land. Some say the inability of many Peshwah to bond with horses comes from this single act. The actions of the lead Hommett of the tribe, Peshwah na-Swahi am-Hadeen, saved the day and turned the tide. Swahi cast Day of Legend on the Sufz Prophet, Peshwah na-Hasha, giving his own life to prolong hers. Hasha slew each of the cultists as a result, and then fell herself, victim to the wounds she suffered in doing the deed. The actions of Swahi averted total disaster. The blood rite the Cult of Calelrin had planned was incomplete, as Hasha's life was sustained beyond the duration of the rite.

From the blood of the Twelve Prophets rose the god Yoosef. From both the failures and sacrifice of the Sufz, his identity was formed as well as that of the Sufz. The Sufz are defined by repentance and tradition. As a result, they are a conservative and devout voice among the Peshwah. The Sufz are frozen in a moment in time, the moment of Yoosef's birth.

The Sufz worship Hak and Yoosef, but not those aspects of Yoosef embraced by the Somhak and Faleem. The Sufz focus on Yoosef as god of the earth and magic. The Sufz embrace the wokan and the sorcerer and have long sought the Zah as stewards on this journey. Many among the Sufz revel in the coarse power of magic as it boils out of the Hak and into them. Many of the Sufz are druids too, and their approach to the divine often flows directly from the land. The druids of Yoosef are a force to be reckoned with among the Sufz.

Politics

The Bortai and Sufz have shared the eastern Hak for as long as the Peshwah have been divided into tribes. Their bond is immutable and they are tied closely by Shia am-Caru Shada. The Haksoja of both tribes are likely to have members from either tribe. Likewise, the Zah have long been allies of the Sufz. The Sufz defer to the Zah in matters of the spirit and the Zah welcome Sufz sons with sorcerous aptitude into the tents. The Leron and the Sufz share a fatalistic bent that makes them easy allies. However, it is their shared concern over the Valley of the Ancients that truly binds them together.

The Somhak and the Sufz have developed closer ties since the death of Hadeen. The Sufz understand the stain of this sort of failure and have supported the Somhak in their difficulty.

The Peshneath and Faleem find the Sufz coarse and ill-mannered. The Sufz value frankness above all things. This comes across poorly to these tribes. The Sufz do not understand the Qulaam and this is a point of friction between them. The Sufz have, at times, disdained the these tribes' ways of life and it has made for uncomfortable communication.

The Ornidri and the Sufz respect each others as warriors. Likewise the Irfat recognize the commitment the Sufz have made to the people. It is often the wide ranging herds of the Sufz that make lean winters bearable. Also, the Sufz contingent at Naktok is always drawn from the best and most able in their number and is regularly rotated and reinforced.

The Adiel still hold the Sufz responsible for the death of Prophets and discuss this with the Sufz as if it occurred yesterday. The Sufz are deferential but are quick to point out the Adiel have begun to surrender the old ways and live as the northerners and the Thonians do.

The Sufz respect what the Briela do, but the two have so little in common that interaction beyond formality is rare. The Sufz rarely foster their sons to this clan.

Rites and Rituals

The Sufz offer up their sons to the Zah, the Bortai, the Leron and now the Somhak, as penance to the Peshwah for the murder of the prophets. Young boys are usually fostered between the ages of five and eight during the Camberi and stay with the fostered family as a servant for one year. The Sufz do this as an act of contrition for the prophets. It is not uncommon for the sons of the Sufz to be placed with tribes other than the ones listed above, even the Qulaam. The Sufz often seek out individuals among the tribes who are considered devout, and place their sons among them. It is not unheard of, although much rarer, for the Peshwah to do the same with holy men who are not Peshwah. This can be the fate of particularly troublesome boys.

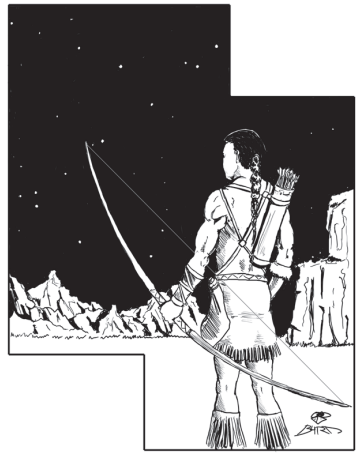
Marriages are strictly arranged and the Sufz are patriarchal. They will marry younger sons to the Zah, but prefer to arrange marriages among the Leron and the Bortai. Rarely will the Bortai marry outside of these groups, but Somhak marriages have become more and more common these last ten years.

The Sufz stay bonded to horses throughout their lives and their spell casters commonly take up the horse bond too. Peshwah unable to bond are exiled from the tribe.

Weapons and Horses

The Sufz breed bay roan horses. These are horses that are brown with a high percentage of white hairs mixed into the coat. This makes a murky grayish brown on the animal's torso and brown on the head and legs. The Sufz breed their horses to support their hunting and husbandry of their herds, breeding for thick hides and speed.

The Sufz prefer the lance and the short composite bow. They wear steel caps for helmets and will adorn their helmet with the tails of past mounts. The Sufz wear light armor and spider silk, but often shift to chain and breastplate during time of war. This is especially true of those in their number that function as heavy cavalry.



The Zah

Population: 600 adults. 390 men and women are capable combatants.
Herds: 1,100 horses, 300 goats, 400 oxen.
Horses: White, often with bay or chestnut markings and paint.
Allied Tribes: Traditional: Somhak, Sufz, Briela, Faleem, Adiel, and Leron. Current: Somhak, Sufz, Briela, Faleem, Adiel, and Leron.

Lands and History

The Zah are the mystics and seers of the Peshwah. Long ago they settled around the Salt Tower, in the center of the High Hak, and began to serve as stewards and guardians of that sacred site. The Zah are ruled by their women, and this marks them as different from the other tribes. The Zah are matriarchal in much the same way the Bortai are patriarchal. Their tradition demands this leadership. The Zah are the children of Mother Wind, and close to the elemental sprit that help craft both the Peshwah and the first horse.

The Zah are the protectors of the Tower of Salt. Inside the Tower of Salt are the bones of the first horse, and a gateway into the land of the gods. The Zah derive their power from their proximity to the Tower. There are a greater percentage of spell casters among the Zah than any other tribe. Additionally, the Zah harvest the salt produced by the Tower and share it among the people. This resource is managed by the elders of the clan from the Besh am-Mino, the tent of the sighted. Salt is a gold standard among the Peshwah and the Zah regulate the economy of their people through its careful control.

The Zah of the Besh am-Mino are the wisest and eldest of their clan. All are mothers of sons and daughters and past the age when they can give birth. Each has some connection to the arcane or divine and practices magic. The Besh am-Mino itself is an extra-planar space rumored and much larger than is apparent from the outside. The Zah within have been known to lose invaders within its infinite halls.

The Zah lands are an uplifted sheet of bedrock. They have some marbles to cut and work and there is some quarried rock. The Zah manage this resource carefully, but will trade for stone. Their statuary is well known, as are the stone houses they have built to carry them through the winters on the Hak. Most of the Zah live in Colenso Station, and a few practice agriculture on a limited scale.

The Zah lands are sacred to the Peshwah. The Zah themselves are held in reverence. Potent diviners are numbered among the Zah and they are the Oracles of their people. The Peshwah consult with the Zah and visit the Tower of Salt, throughout their lives. Most devote Peshwah begin their day with prayers to the Tower, and will try to face it, wherever they are in the world.

The men of the Zah tend the herds, are fierce warriors, and understand their role as protectors. Horse breeding is also a male responsibility among the Zah. The Zah control their horses stock with vigor and precision. In general, the women guide the tribe. The men act as stewards and protectors. Zah warriors are known for the quality of the gear they possess. The Zah are skilled at item creation and it is not unusual for even the youngest warrior to have at least one item crafted with magical enhancements.

The Zah support and counsel all of the Peshwah and are respected and supported by even the most cynical. The Zah take their role seriously. Is it here the Peshwah and many outlanders come to seek advice and often to have items of great power identified and crafted.

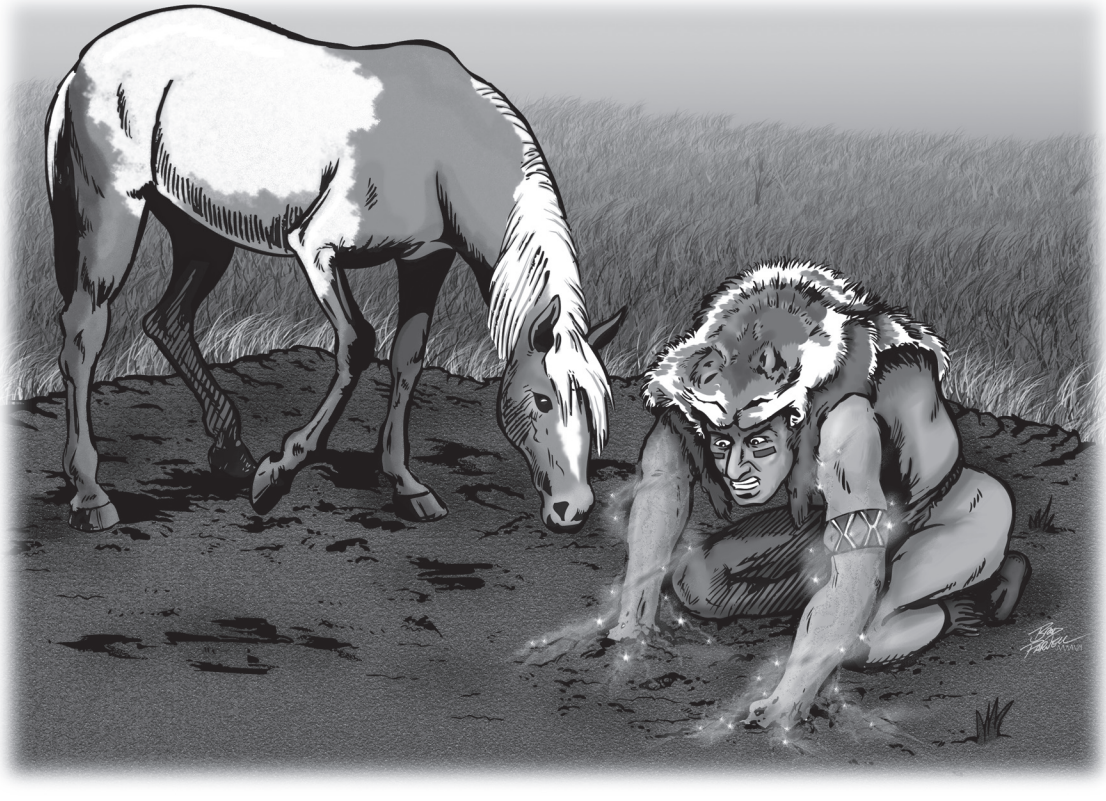
Politics

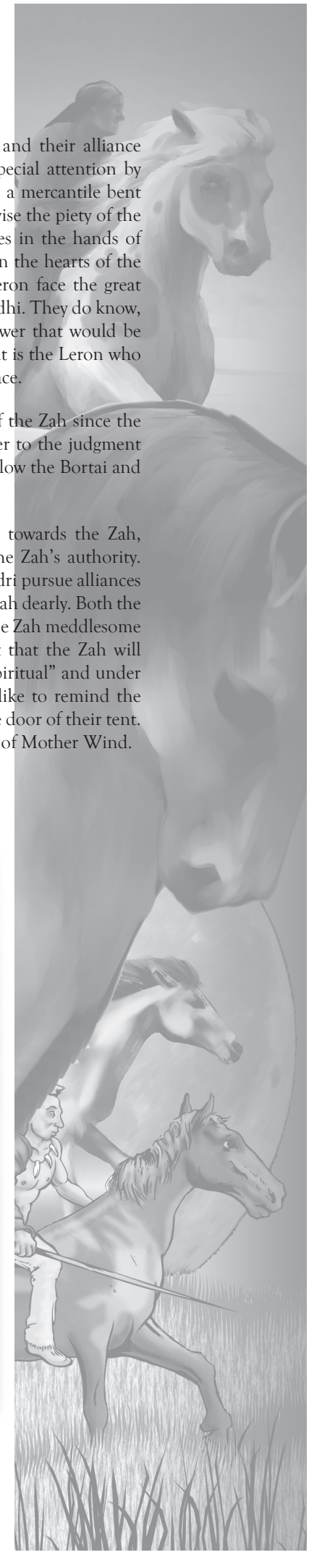
The Zah are closely allied with the Somhak and the Briela. The Somhak and the Zah share a spiritual bent and also a desire for unity that has defined both tribes. The Briela are the prophesied savors of the people, and the Zah give them their complete support. Further, the Briela wander the world. As more Zah have become wizards in the last centuries, it is often the Zah married into Briela households who return to their mothers each Camberi with spell books and magic returned from the outside world. The alliance has an economic underpinning too.

The Adiel protect and support the Zah and their alliance is absolute. What the Zah say is given special attention by the Adiel. The Faleem and the Zah share a mercantile bent that has helped both tribes prosper. Likewise the piety of the Faleem has made them malleable at times in the hands of the Zah. The Leron hold a special place in the hearts of the Zah. The Zah do not believe that the Leron face the great enemy. This, say the Zah, must be the Afridhi. They do know, that the Valley of the Ancients holds power that would be destructive in the wrong hands, and that it is the Leron who act as wardens of the entrances to that space.

The Sufz have accepted the instruction of the Zah since the murder of the twelve prophets. They defer to the judgment of the Zah on all matters spiritual, and follow the Bortai and the Somhak on matters martial.

The Qulaam and Peshneath are neutral towards the Zah, respecting them but unimpressed with the Zah's authority. The Ornidri and the Zah argue. The Ornidri pursue alliances that the Zah are certain will cost the Peshwah dearly. Both the Ornidri, the Irfat, and the Bortai all call the Zah meddlesome and political and are quick to point out that the Zah will declare any issue that suits their liking "spiritual" and under their purview. The Bortai, in particular like to remind the Zah that their dominion should end at the door of their tent. This does not rest will with the daughters of Mother Wind.





Peshwah na-Siopa is Hommett of the Zah and leader of the council of Zah mystics. Siopa is a sorcerer specialized in divination magic and it is said her vision pierces both flesh and spirit. Siopa has spent her life asking questions and searching for answers. The death of Hadeen occurred as she was just coming into her power and unable to predict and search with the same skill she now possesses. Siopa has tried to perfect the craft of divination. She sees her questions and the questions of the Zah as the armor that shields the Peshwah against bad decision.

The leado of the Zah is the druid Peshwah na-Iliji bri Suvu. She leads the Zah warriors in battle and is known for her skill as a rider. Iliji rarely shape changes unless it is for reconnaissance. In general, she fights alongside the warriors, bolstering their numbers with summoned allies. Iliji survived capture in her youth, but her left cheek bears the scar of an Afridhi brand. She has left it to remind all of the hated the Afridhi bear her people.

Peshwah na-Ikiru is a spirit guide of the Zah. She is a wokan and a hermit and known among the people for her knowledge of Peshwah history and her judge of character. Ikiru often leads young Peshwah on journeys across the High Hak, and sometimes even now, into the Plains of Hak to learn their Ishi, their purest manifestation of will, or to seek a vision. Few Peshwah who are lehcus are respected as much as Ikiru. She has devoted herself to the perfection of the Peshwah soul. Nearing her fiftieth year, Ikiru has guided many young Peshwah, including the young leado of the Ornidri, and alleged starborn of Hadeen, on quest that helped them find their destiny. Ikiru picks a place each year and makes a sod hut, staying in that place one season, and then moving to the next place that strikes her fancy. Ikiru always marks those she has counseled with tattoos that signify the nature of their journey and her judgment of their character.



Rites and Rituals

The Zah marry for love and no son or daughter of the Zah will be bartered like an oxen or Thonian horse. The heart and sprit must guide the choice. The Faleem and the Somhak are the most common marriages made by the Zah because these tribes are most amenable to this style of marriage.

The horse bond is common and constant for warriors but not so for the arcane casters of the Zah. Many do not choose to bond. There is no stigma in this among the Zah. Many Zah will bond during their youth, and then never do so again.

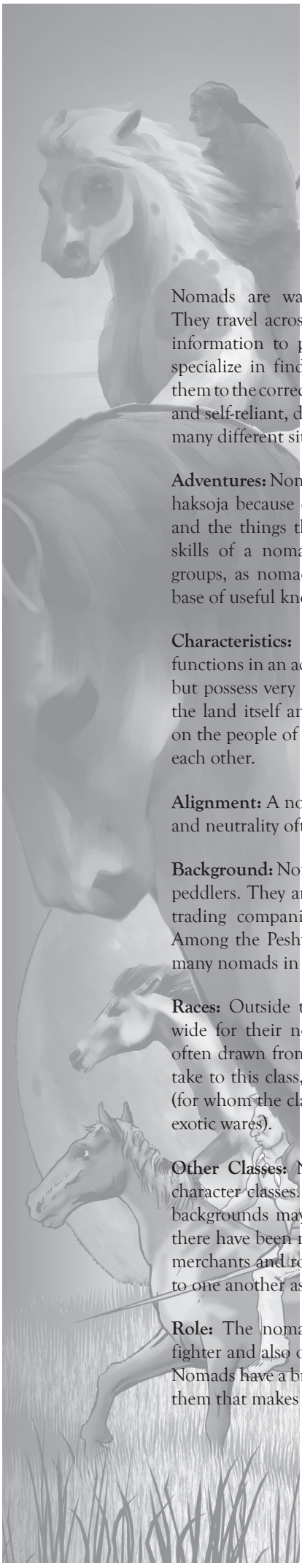
Weapons and Horses

The Zah warrior wears light armor, with leathers or spider silk being the most common. The Zah are archers in much the same way the Somhak are archers, but flatly have never cultivated the same level of skill. The Zah use the Prophet's Shield and lances and prefer swords and scimitars as hand weapons.

Zah horses are white and bred for speed and endurance. Zah horses are said to be descended from the bloodline of the first horse and are never traded to outsiders. An outlander with a Zah horse is assumed to be a thief and is attacked on sight.







Chapter Four: Mechanics

The Nomad

Nomads are wandering guides, peddlers and explorers. They travel across the face of Blackmoor taking goods and information to places that are isolated and remote. They specialize in finding rare and precious items and bringing them to the correct buyer. Nomads are adaptable, independent and self-reliant, developing many skills to help them navigate many different situations.

Adventures: Nomads find themselves as members of Peshwah haksoja because of their interest in odd and faraway places and the things that can be acquired there. The specialized skills of a nomad are often sought after by adventuring groups, as nomads are durable in a fight, but with a solid base of useful knowledge, too.

Characteristics: Nomads can perform many different functions in an adventuring group. They are durable fighters, but possess very many skills. While a ranger is an expert in the land itself and its flora and fauna, a nomad is focused on the people of the land and the ways in which they engage each other.

Alignment: A nomad can be of any alignment, although law and neutrality often take center stage.

Background: Nomads often work as caravan guards or as lone peddlers. They are sometimes members of merchant guilds, trading companies or well respected mercantile families. Among the Peshwah, both the Briela and the Faleem have many nomads in their number.

Races: Outside the Peshwah, halflings are known far and wide for their nomads and the Thonian caravan guard is often drawn from this class. Dwarves and docrae also often take to this class, as do some of the more outgoing gnomes (for whom the class is a boon for the peddling of their more exotic wares).

Other Classes: Nomads ordinarily get along well with all character classes. Nomads from more traditional mercantile backgrounds may find themselves at odds with rogues, but there have been many successful alliances between larcenous merchants and rogues, and the classes are not as antithetical to one another as one might first suppose.

Role: The nomad functions well as a solid second-string fighter and also often as the "face" for an adventuring party. Nomads have a broad range of skills and esoterica available to them that makes them a wellspring of information.

Game Rule Information

Nomads have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Strength, Dexterity and Constitution all contribute to durability in combat, which is important when out in the wilds alone. Intelligence is important for this class, as it determines the volume of skills available, and a high Charisma is often useful, too, as the nomad has a fair amount of social skills that rely on it.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d8.

Starting Gold: 4d6 x 10 gp.

Class Skills: The nomad's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Navigate (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are characteristics of the nomad.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Nomads are proficient with simple weapons, all martial weapons save two-handed martial weapons, and with light armor and shields (but not tower shields).

Fast Movement (Ex): A nomad's land speed is faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet. This benefit applies only when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor and not carrying a heavy load. Apply this bonus before modifying the nomad's speed because of any load carried or armor worn.

Skill Focus: All nomads gain Skill Focus as a bonus feat at 1st level. The focus of the feat must be in one of the nomad's class skills.

Wanderlust: Nomads are possessed of an incurable wanderlust, the irresistible impulse to travel. A nomad who stays too long in one place grows restive and distracted—a state imposing a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, initiative rolls, skill checks, and ability checks—until he can get back on the

road. This restlessness begins when he wakes up in a new place (or at dawn, if he hasn't slept), but doesn't impose the distracted condition upon him for one week plus 1 day per point of Wisdom bonus (if positive). So, a nomad with a 14 Wisdom would wake distracted on the morning of the ninth day after waking up in the same locale.

This wanderlust gets worse as the nomad advances in level, requiring that he stay away for longer periods before returning to previously visited locales. To "restart the clock" on a given locale, a nomad must sleep a number of nights away from it equal to his nomad level. If he returns before such time, he re-assumes the distracted condition immediately upon re-entering that locale. (For these purposes, a locale is defined as any single area—from a particular glade or cavern system—or community, from the tiniest thorp to the largest metropolis.) For example, an 8th-level nomad decides he will take a trip to a neighboring city in order to assuage his restiveness. His distracted condition alleviates as soon as he leaves town, but he must sleep eight nights away from it before returning, or he will once again assume the distracted condition and his trip will be for naught.

Bonus Feats: At 2nd level, and every other level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 18th, and 20th), a nomad gets a bonus feat which must be drawn from the feats noted as nomad bonus feats on the list below. A nomad must meet all prerequisites for the bonus feat, including ability score minimums. These bonus feats are in addition to the feats that a character of any class gets from advancing in levels. (A nomad is not limited to the list of nomad bonus feats when choosing these latter feats.)

Nomad Bonus Feats: Communicator [P], Educated [P], Great Fortitude, Jack of All Trades [P], Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Performer [P], Run, Skill Focus, Track, and Worker [P]. In addition, this list also includes all feats whose benefit is to provide a +2 bonus to two different skills, including (but not limited to) feats like Acolyte [P], Assessor [P], Assimilate [P], Acrobatic, Agile, Alertness, Animal Affinity, Athletic, Believable [P], Camouflage [P], Circumvent [P], Coerce [P], Connoisseur [P], Deceitful, Deft Hands, Diligent, Duplicity [P], Expedite [P], Feeling [P], Fleet [P], Investigator, Magical Aptitude, Mountaineer [P], Navigator [P], Negotiator, Nimble Fingers, Persuasive, Robust [P], Self-Sufficient, Shepherd [P], Stealthy, and Watchful Eye [P].

[P] Indicates a feat found in the Player's Guide to Blackmoor.

Trackless Step (Ex): Starting at 3rd level, a nomad leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. He may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

Folklorist: When a nomad reaches 5th level, he has accumulated a great many stories, tales and legends, and can call upon that folklore for useful information. This feature acts as the bardic knowledge ability (PH 28), but functions as though the nomad were a bard of three levels lower than his nomad level. He may only draw upon information pertaining to notworthy people, items, and places of humanoid or monstrous humanoid cultures.

The Nomad

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Fast movement, Skill Focus, wanderlust
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Bonus feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Trackless step
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Folklorist
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+5	Bonus feat
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	Improved trackless step
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+6	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+6	Venom immunity
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+7	Bonus feat
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+7	Confident stride
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+8	Bonus feat
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+8	Seasoned traveler
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+9	Bonus feat
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+9	Tongue of one land
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+10	Bonus feat
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Timeless body
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Bonus feat
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Pathfinder
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bonus feat

Improved Trackless Step (Ex): Upon reaching 7th level, a nomad can apply his trackless step ability to any mount he rides, so long as the mount is of the Animal, Magical Beast, or Vermin type.

Venom Immunity (Ex): At 9th level, a nomad gains immunity to all poisons.

Confident Stride (Ex): A nomad of at least 11th level can move through any sort of undergrowth (in any terrain) at his normal speed, and without suffering any other impairment. (Overgrown areas that are enchanted or magically manipulated still have a chance of affecting him, but he receives a +2 bonus on any saves or checks required to overcome the impediment.) In addition, the nomad receives a +4 insight bonus on Survival checks to avoid becoming lost.

Seasoned Traveler (Ex): A nomad of at least 13th level can make a free forced march (DMG 164) for a number of hours equal to 2 + his Con bonus (if positive) before having to begin making Constitution checks.

Tongue of One Land (Ex): By 15th level, a nomad has traveled sufficiently far and wide to have picked up a smattering of common languages. The nomad can communicate with any humanoid or monstrous humanoid that has a language. (This doesn't apply to written forms of these languages, only the spoken tongue.)

Timeless Body (Ex): Upon reaching 17th level, a nomad no longer takes penalties to his ability scores for aging and cannot be magically aged. Any such penalties that he has already taken, however, remain in place. Bonuses still accrue, and the nomad still dies of old age when his time is up.

Pathfinder (Su): By the time a nomad has attained 19th level, his mastery of the highways and byways of the land has grown supernatural in nature. He is now under the constant effect of a find the path spell. Unlike most supernatural abilities, this ability always functions normally, even in anti-magic areas.

Ex-Nomads

A nomad who feels a deep calling to another way of life, or one who has simply decided that the time has come to settle down, can rid himself of the distracted condition by forever forsaking the path of the nomad. In game terms, he must make this decision after taking a level in a class other than nomad, but before acquiring his next level in any class. Once the decision is made, the character is freed from the distracted condition and may never again gain new levels as a nomad (though he retains all nomad abilities).

Prestige Classes

The new prestige classes presented herein are known only among the Peshwah and their cousins, and the DM is encouraged to retain their mystery by denying access to these classes to PCs of other races and cultures.

Bloodwind Knife (Caru Kah-Zeiga)

The bloodwind knife is a secret adherent of Calelrin, god of lies and murder. The bloodwind knives conceal themselves among the Peshwah tribes, planting seeds of malice and hatred. A bloodwind knife almost always acts alone, knowing only two or three other adherents of Calelrin with whom he plots against the most noble of the Peshwah.

Most Bloodwind Knives begin their careers as either rangers or clerics of Calelrin, taking a level or two of rogue to hone their stealth abilities. Occasionally, outlander assassins are inducted into the cult so they may thwart the designs of goodly Peshwah beyond the boundaries of the Hak.

If a Peshwah tribe has fallen prey to tragedy and dishonor, a bloodwind knife was likely involved in causing—or at the very least, exacerbating—the problems. Conversely, a tribe that is well-known for upholding the Peshwah virtues also likely contains one or two bloodwind knives bent on tearing down that reputation.



Entry Requirements

Alignment: Any non-good.

Skills: Bluff 8 ranks, Hide 4 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks.

Feat: Weapon Focus (dagger).

Special: Sneak attack +1d6; must have caused the death or grave dishonor of an honorable Peshwah.

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Bluff, Disable Device, Disguise, Forgery, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Listen, Move Silently, Open Lock, Profession, Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Spot, and Tumble.

Class Features

As a bloodwind knife advances in level, he becomes more skilled in the arts of stealth and secret murder, as well as gaining the ability to sow dissension and fear by thwarting attempts to discern the true culprit behind his misdeeds.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A bloodwind knife gains no proficiency with any weapons or armor.

Conceal Hatred (Sp): Once per day, a bloodwind knife may use undetectable alignment on himself as a sorcerer equal to his class level.

Sneak Attack (Ex): A bloodwind knife deals an extra 1d6 points of damage when he is flanking an opponent or at any time when the target would be denied its Dexterity bonus to AC. This extra damage stacks with any sneak attack damage gained from another class (such as rogue), and applies to ranged attacks only if the target is within 30 feet. At 3rd level, this extra damage increases to 2d6. See the rogue class feature (PHB 50).

Deceiver's Tongue (Sp): Once per day, a bloodwind knife of 2nd level or higher may use glibness on himself as a sorcerer of his class level.

Shadow's Embrace (Sp): Once per day, a bloodwind knife of 3rd level or higher may use invisibility on himself as a sorcerer of his class level.

Cast the Blame (Su): Calelrin's cloak of shadow covers his favored tools. Whenever a bloodwind knife of 4th level or higher is subject to a divination spell, he may choose to redirect the spell to another target. The bloodwind knife is automatically aware that a divination effect is seeking him, but not the exact spell or caster. If the bloodwind knife does not immediately nominate another target, or that target is not within range of the spell effect (if any) the spell works normally. For instance, if a wokan casts scry to find the owner of a dagger used as a murder weapon, the bloodwind knife who committed the crime knows someone has cast a divination with him as the target, and may redirect the spell to implicate someone else. If, however, he is subjected to a detect thoughts spell, and no other viable target is present, the spell would affect him normally.

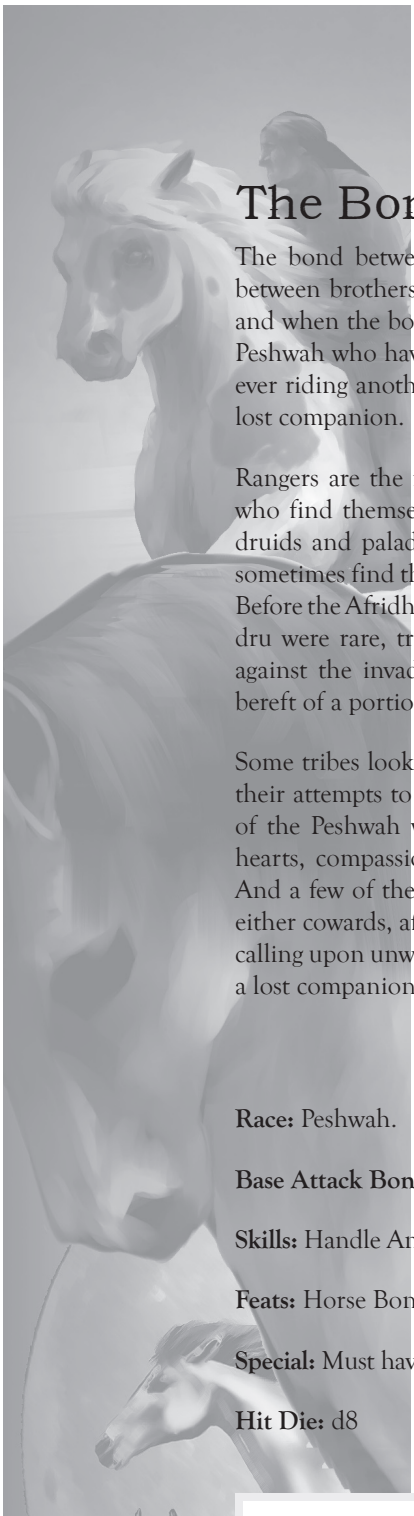
Similarly, any attempt to contact the spirit of a victim slain by the sneak attack or death attack of a bloodwind knife of fourth level or higher, such as with contact other plane or speak with dead, is instead redirected to that bloodwind knife, who may provide any response to the question he pleases.

Particularly high level casters are not as easily fooled as are novices. Someone casting a divination spell that is deflected by a bloodwind knife can make a caster level check to see if he realizes something has polluted the divination (though he can't discern the cause or true source). To realize this, the diviner must make a caster level check with a DC of 20 + bloodwind knife's class level + Int modifier.

Death Attack (Ex): At 5th level, a bloodwind knife gains a death attack, as the assassin ability (DMG 180). If the bloodwind knife has this class feature from another class (such as assassin), he may add his bloodwind knife class levels together with the class levels of other such classes to calculate the save DC of his death attack.

The Bloodwind Knife

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Conceal hatred, sneak attack +1d6
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Deceiver's tongue
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Shadow's embrace, sneak attack +2d6
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Cast the blame
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Death attack



The Bond-lost (Briena-dru)

The bond between Peshwah and horse is as deep as that between brothers. For some, this connection is deeper still, and when the bond is broken, they can never forge another. Peshwah who have lost a beloved steed occasionally forswear ever riding another, instead clinging to the memory of their lost companion.

Rangers are the most common of those shattered Peshwah who find themselves on the sad path of the bond-lost, but druids and paladins who have lost a cherished companion sometimes find the chance to maintain their bond appealing. Before the Afridhi started their assault on the Hak, the Briena-dru were rare, tragic figures of myth, but after every battle against the invaders, a few more Peshwah find themselves bereft of a portion of their soul.

Some tribes look on the Briena-dru with admiration, seeing their attempts to cling to a lost steed as a noble affirmation of the Peshwah way of life. Others have only pity in their hearts, compassion for a grief than can never be released. And a few of the more conservative tribes see Briena-dru as either cowards, afraid to forge a new bond, or abominations, calling upon unwholesome spirits in a naïve attempt to retain a lost companion.

Entry Requirements

Race: Peshwah.

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Skills: Handle Animal 8 ranks, Ride 4 ranks, Survival 2 ranks

Feats: Horse Bond

Special: Must have lost a bonded mount and not replaced it.

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Climb, Craft, Handle Animal, Jump, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Listen, Move Silently, Profession, Ride, Search, Spot, and Survival.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the bond-lost prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A Briena-dru gains no new proficiencies with weapons or armor.

Fast Movement (Ex): The bond-lost gains some of her lost ally's speed. This manifests as a bonus to her base land speed of +10 feet, rising to +20 feet at 5th level and to a total of +30 feet at 9th level. This benefit only applies when the character is wearing no armor or light armor and not carrying a heavy load.

Low-light Vision (Ex): A Briena-dru can see twice as far as a normal human in poor lighting conditions.

Mourning: The bond-lost was so devoted to her lost mount that she never willingly rides another horse. While a Briena-dru may be carried on horseback while unconscious or helpless, should she voluntarily mount a horse, she loses access to all class features until she receives an atonement spell.

Ability Score Increase: At 2nd level and again at 6th level, the bond-lost gains a permanent +1 bonus to her Strength score. At 4th level and again at 8th level, she gains a permanent +1 bonus to her Dexterity score.

Devotion (Ex): From 2nd level, the protective spirit of her lost companion helps protect a Briena-dru from insidious magic, granting a +2 sacred bonus on saves against Enchantment spells and effects.

The Bond-lost

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Fast movement +10, low-light vision, mourning
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Devotion, +1 Str
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Mustang's speed 1/day, Run
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Friend beyond the gate, +1 Dex
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Fast movement +20, phantom steed
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Twin soul, +1 Str
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Mustang's speed 2/day, +1 natural armor
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Scent
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Fast movement +30, Dex +1
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Call from beyond

Mustang's Speed (Sp): A Briena-dru of at least 3rd level is able to cast *mustang's speed* on herself once per day, with a caster level equal to her class level. She may use this ability an additional time per day at 7th level.

Run: At 3rd level, the bond-lost gains Run as a bonus feat.

Friend Beyond the Gate (Su): As part of her soul already resides in the Other World, a bond-lost of at least 4th level gains a measure of resistance to death. She gains a +2 sacred bonus to saves against negative energy and death effects, and to resist ability damage or drain caused by the undead.

Phantom Steed (Sp): Once per week, starting at 5th level, a bond-lost may call upon her former companion for transport, as if she cast *phantom steed* at a caster level equal to her class level. Using this ability does not violate the bond-lost's mourning.

Twin Soul (Su): By 6th level, the bond-lost's soul is so intertwined with that of her lost steed that she is considered both a humanoid and an animal (whichever is more beneficial at the time) for the purposes of spells and other effects. Thus, a Briena-dru could benefit from both enlarge person and animal growth spells, while choosing to ignore both charm person and charm animal spells.

Scent (Ex): At 8th level, a Briena-dru gains the Scent ability.

Call From Beyond (Su): Once per day, a 10th level bond-lost may call her mount from beyond the veil. The mount takes the form of a ghost heavy steppes charger; apply all benefits for an animal companion or special mount (levels in bond-lost stack with paladin or effective druid/ranger levels for this purpose). The mount has the Manifestation and Draining Touch (Wisdom) special attacks (MM 117). The Briena-dru may freely mount and ride her ghostly companion as if it was not incorporeal, and it remains present for 10 rounds + 1 round per point of the character's Cha bonus.

Grass Stalker (Muweh Idako)

The Hak is an endlessly flowing sea of grass for much of its breadth, providing home and sustenance to the game that feed the Peshwah and the horses that sustain them. A dedicated band of Peshwah hunters and mystics protects this vital resource from any who seek to harm the land. These grass stalkers develop a close bond with the lands of the Hak, and are able to partake of their deep and subtle power.

Most grass stalkers are druids or wokan, but a fair number of rangers have also dedicated themselves to the lore of the plains. Grass stalkers come from all the tribes of the Peshwah, but work together to quell intertribal disputes that may harm the land, or to unite different tribes against a threat to the Hak itself.

Entry Requirements

Race: Peshwah.

Skills: Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) 8 ranks, Survival 8 ranks.

Religion: Must be a worshipper of Hak.

Feats: Track.

Special: Trackless step class feature.

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Concentration, Craft, Handle Animal, Heal, Hide, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Listen, Move Silently, Profession, Ride, Spot, and Survival.

Grass Stalker

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Blades of grass (masterwork), one with the land	—
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Cloak of the plains	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Camouflage	—
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Blades of grass (+1), grass stride	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Hide in plain sight	—
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Whispering grass	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Blades of grass (keen)	—
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	Grass stride 2/day	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	Ten thousand leaves	—
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	Servant of the plains	+1 level of existing spellcasting class

Heart of Fire

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	No mercy +1d6, savagery, share rage
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Wine of death
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bloodthirsty advance
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Extra rage
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	My enemy's strength
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	No mercy +2d6, terrifying blow
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Stoking fury's fire
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Extra rage
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Hatred hones my blade
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Spirit devourer

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the grass stalker prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A grass stalker gains no new proficiencies with weapons or armor.

Spells Per Day/Spells Known: A grass stalker continues training in spellcasting as well as learning the secrets of the plains. At each even level gained in the grass stalker class, he gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class level. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If he had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a grass stalker, he must decide to which class to add each level for the purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Blades of Grass (Su): A grass stalker may concentrate the land's power into blades of grass, imbuing them with the strength and sharpness of steel. At 1st level, these blades of grass are considered masterwork daggers. At 4th level, they are considered +1 daggers, and by 7th level they are considered +1 keen daggers. Blades of grass retain their power for as long as the grass stalker holds them, and for one round after they are released (for instance, if they are thrown at an enemy). Plucking a new blade of grass is a move action, as long as there is grass within reach.

One With the Land (Ex): A grass stalker gains a bonus equal to his class level on Hide and Survival checks made in grasslands.

Cloak of the Plains (Su): When in natural terrain, all ranged attacks against a grass stalker of at least 2nd level suffer a 20% miss chance, as he seems to ripple and flow like the grass itself.

Camouflage (Ex): Beginning at 3rd level, a grass stalker can use the Hide skill in any sort of natural terrain, even if there is no cover or concealment.

Grass Stride (Sp): Once per day, a 4th level grass stalker may move from one part of the plain to another without crossing the space in between. This ability functions like the treestride spell, but only allows him to move from one patch of grass to another. A grass stalker must begin and end the movement prone, and must lie on an area of living grass large enough to contain him. A grass stalker may use this ability twice per day upon reaching 8th level.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): Starting at 5th level, a grass stalker can use the Hide skill in natural terrain even while being observed. See the ranger class feature (PHB 48).

Whispering Grass (Sp): Once per day, a grass stalker of 6th level or higher may communicate with all the grasses growing in the area. This functions exactly like a *commune with nature* spell, but the grass stalker may only gain information about areas where grass is growing.

Ten Thousand Leaves of Grass (Su): At 9th level, a grass stalker's ties to the land have grown so strong that he may sometimes cheat death. Once per day, when he would be reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, he instead dissipates into a swirl of grass for 2d4 rounds, after which time he reforms in the same square. While dissipated, the grass stalker is dazed and is treated as an incorporeal creature. If a grass stalker is killed while in this form, his body is scattered and requires a *resurrection* spell to be brought back to life. The grass stalker can choose whether or not to activate this ability.

Servant of the Plains: When a grass stalker reaches 10th level, he achieves perfect unity with the land. His type changes to Plant and he gains a +4 insight bonus to Wisdom. In addition to gaining all the Plant type traits, the grass stalker also now ages at one-tenth the normal rate, and no longer needs to eat or sleep.

Heart of Fire (Nusi Ska)

The Nusi Ska are the most savage warriors among the Peshwah. The Nusi Ska is a close-knit warrior brotherhood, linked by bonds of blood and pain. A prospective heart of fire must undergo severe initiation rituals, which include branding, scarring, and a dark, secret ritual that culminates in devouring the still-beating heart of an enemy of the Peshwah. Routinely, the Nusi Ska will embark on these blood rites at the end of the Camberi, seeking out the enemies of the Peshwah on the Plains of Hak. The Nusi Ska often form their own Haksoja, and it is not unusual for the band to have members from different tribes who come together for seasonal raiding.

While the Sirk of the Peshwah may inform the Nusi Ska who the current enemies of the Tribes are, he has little power to command them beyond his own strength. The current Sirk slew the last leader of the Nusi Ska in single combat after an argument over allying with King Uther, so they enthusiastically support his decision to concentrate on the Afridhi rather than the northerners. However, should he ever display a moment's weakness, the Nusi Ska are likely to return to their path of indiscriminate slaughter and bloodshed.

Most Nusi Ska are barbarians, although several also have levels of fighter or ranger. Peshwah from the Irfat, the Bortai, the Sufz, the Adiel and the Qulaam are common among the Nusi Ska, and are invited into the order as a result of established lineage or from acts of notoriety. It is rare for the Somhak, Ornidri or Faleem to join this group. About one in five of those invited do not survive the initiation rituals. While not all members of the brotherhood are members of the Nusi Ska prestige class, the most powerful and respected certainly are.

Entry Requirements

Alignment: Chaotic Evil, Chaotic Neutral, Neutral, or Neutral Evil.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Intimidate 4 ranks, Ride 4 ranks.

Feats: Cleave, Horse Bond, Power Attack.

Special: Rage special ability; must have slain a foe in battle in a single round (reduced from full HP to 0 or fewer HP in a single round, or an uninjured foe must fail a save against death from massive damage).

Hit Die: d10

Class Skills (2+ Int modifier per level): Craft, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Jump, Listen, Profession, Ride.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the heart of fire prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Nusi Ska are proficient with all martial weapons, but gain no proficiency with armor or shields.

No Mercy (Ex): Whenever a heart of fire drops a foe with a melee attack, he deals an additional 1d6 damage to that foe. At 6th level, this increases to an additional 2d6 damage. This extra damage counts towards the activation of the heart of fire's other class abilities that require him to kill a foe, such as wine of death, my enemy's strength, or spirit devourer.

Savagery: As a Nusi Ska embraces the seething bloodlust within him, he grows more bestial and violent. A heart of fire suffers a penalty equal to his class level to all Intelligence- and Charisma-based skill and attribute checks, save Intimidate checks, on which the Nusi Ska gains an inherent bonus equal to his class level.

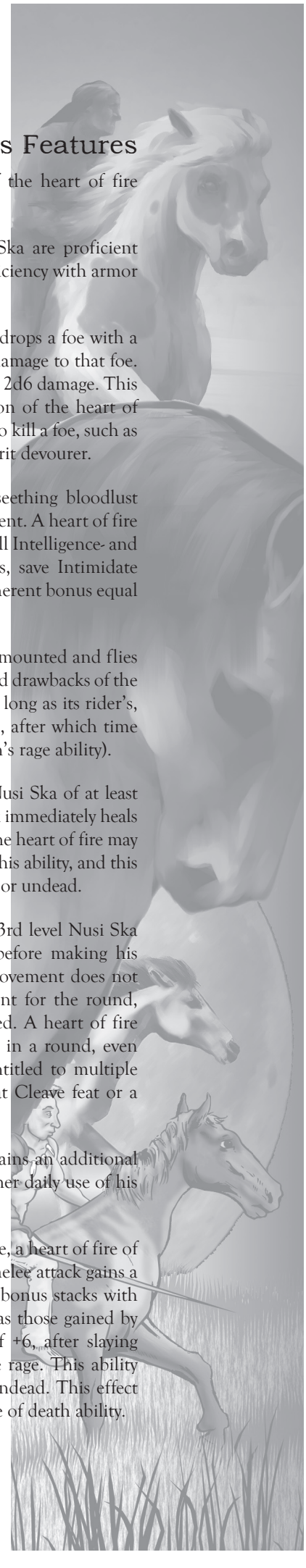
Share Rage (Su): Whenever a Nusi Ska is mounted and flies into a rage, his mount gains the benefits and drawbacks of the rage, as well. The mount's rage lasts for as long as its rider's, or until the heart of fire leaves the saddle, after which time the mount is fatigued (as per the barbarian's rage ability).

Wine of Death (Su): While in a rage, a Nusi Ska of at least 2nd level who kills a foe with a melee attack immediately heals 2 hit points per Hit Die of the fallen foe. The heart of fire may not exceed his normal hit point total with this ability, and this ability does not function against constructs or undead.

Bloodthirsty Advance (Ex): Whenever a 3rd level Nusi Ska drops a foe, he may take a 5-foot step before making his extra attack from the Cleave feat. This movement does not count against the heart of fire's movement for the round, and he may use this ability while mounted. A heart of fire may make only one bloodthirsty advance in a round, even if he drops more than one foe and is entitled to multiple additional attacks, such as from the Great Cleave feat or a similar ability.

Extra Rage: At 4th level, a heart of fire gains an additional daily use of his rage ability. He gains another daily use of his rage ability upon reaching 8th level.

My Enemy's Strength (Su): While in a rage, a heart of fire of 5th level or higher who kills a foe with a melee attack gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Strength. This bonus stacks with those gained from the rage itself, as well as those gained by killing additional foes (to a maximum of +6, after slaying three foes), and lasts until the end of the rage. This ability does not function against constructs or undead. This effect stacks with the benefit granted by the wine of death ability.



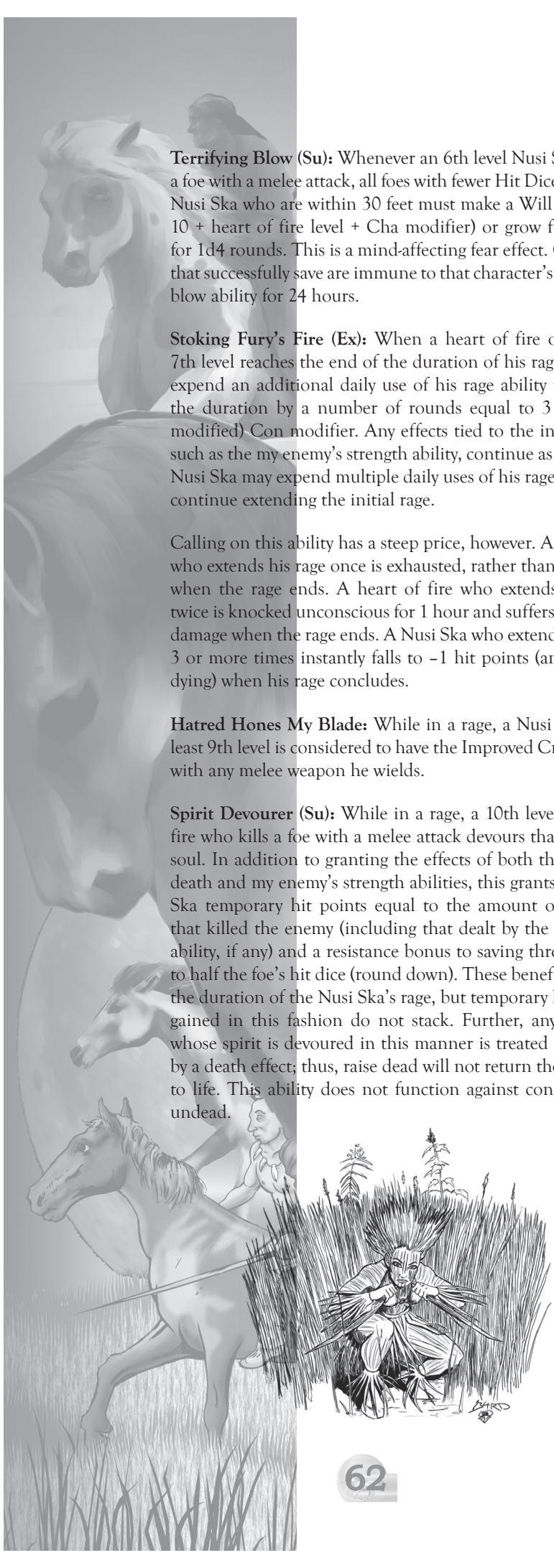
Terrifying Blow (Su): Whenever an 6th level Nusi Ska drops a foe with a melee attack, all foes with fewer Hit Dice than the Nusi Ska who are within 30 feet must make a Will save (DC 10 + heart of fire level + Cha modifier) or grow frightened for 1d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. Creatures that successfully save are immune to that character's terrifying blow ability for 24 hours.

Stoking Fury's Fire (Ex): When a heart of fire of at least 7th level reaches the end of the duration of his rage, he may expend an additional daily use of his rage ability to extend the duration by a number of rounds equal to 3 + (newly modified) Con modifier. Any effects tied to the initial rage, such as the my enemy's strength ability, continue as well. The Nusi Ska may expend multiple daily uses of his rage ability to continue extending the initial rage.

Calling on this ability has a steep price, however. A Nusi Ska who extends his rage once is exhausted, rather than fatigued, when the rage ends. A heart of fire who extends his rage twice is knocked unconscious for 1 hour and suffers 2d6 Con damage when the rage ends. A Nusi Ska who extends his rage 3 or more times instantly falls to –1 hit points (and is thus dying) when his rage concludes.

Hatred Hones My Blade: While in a rage, a Nusi Ska of at least 9th level is considered to have the Improved Critical feat with any melee weapon he wields.

Spirit Devourer (Su): While in a rage, a 10th level heart of fire who kills a foe with a melee attack devours that enemy's soul. In addition to granting the effects of both the wine of death and my enemy's strength abilities, this grants the Nusi Ska temporary hit points equal to the amount of damage that killed the enemy (including that dealt by the no mercy ability, if any) and a resistance bonus to saving throws equal to half the foe's hit dice (round down). These benefits last for the duration of the Nusi Ska's rage, but temporary hit points gained in this fashion do not stack. Further, any creature whose spirit is devoured in this manner is treated as if slain by a death effect; thus, raise dead will not return the creature to life. This ability does not function against constructs or undead.



Hommett

Hommett are the spiritual advisors, teachers, and lore-keepers in the Peshwah clans. They interpret omens and offer advice to their leado, and lead the rituals of respect for the gods and the clan's ancestors. Hommett is both singular and plural and is an ancient Peshwah word whose literal meaning has long been lost. Usually there are many Hommett within a tribe, but only one for each major divinity. This is especially true of Hak. Other Hommett usually do not represent the formal priesthood, but rather are drawn from the most respected of the Peshwah elders.

Most Hommett are clerics or druids, but a fair number of bards, wokan, and elderkin take up the mantle as well. A Hommett derives much of his power from his influence over the members of his clan, so adventuring Hommett are rare, but some feel the call to go on a vision quest or undertake a mission vital to the clan beyond the Hak.

In order to be accepted as a Hommett, a prospective lore-keeper must gain the blessings of the clan's existing Hommett, and then undertake an arduous spiritual journey to commune with the gods and ancestors. It is rare for a Peshwah who has not reached his thirtieth year to be considered an elder, but not unheard of for a talented young scholar to gain the respect of the tribe's teachers.

The role of the Hommett varies from clan to clan; in some, they are the true powers behind the throne, guiding the leado's every decision, while in others, the Hommett are relegated to educating the children, healing the wounded, and little else. In all cases, however, when a Hommett declares that he is speaking for the gods or the ancestors, his word is law. A Hommett who is found to have falsely represented a statement as being of divine or spiritual origin is stripped of his title and authority in the tribe, and exiled from the Hak on pain of death.

While the Hommett prestige class represents the wisest and most powerful of the tribal elders, many tribes have lore-keepers with little or no spellcasting abilities at all. In these cases, the spiritual advisors are chosen from the oldest and wisest in the group, and are accorded all the respect and responsibilities due their more powerful brethren, but draw their divine guidance from a variety of divination tools, from observing the paths of birds to finding patterns in the ever-shifting flow of the grasslands of the Hak.

New Condition: Distracted

A distracted character is unable to focus fully, suffering a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, initiative rolls, skill checks, and ability checks until the condition abates.

Entry Requirements

Race: Peshwah.

Skills: Diplomacy 4 ranks, Knowledge (history) 4 ranks, Knowledge (local) 8 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks.

Feats: Horse Bond.

Special: Must be able to cast 3rd-level spells, at least one of which must be a divination.

Hit Die: d6

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Heal, Intimidate, Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Navigate, Perform, Profession, Ride, Sense Motive, and Spellcraft.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Hommett prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A Hommett gains no new proficiencies with weapons or armor.

Spells Per Day/Spells Known: A Hommett continues training in spellcasting as well as learning the secrets of the plains. At each level gained in the Hommett class save 4th and 8th, he gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class level. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If he had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a Hommett, he must decide to which class to add each level for the purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Respect: A Hommett gains a bonus equal to his class level on Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks against Peshwah of his own clan. He gains a bonus equal to one-half his class level (round down) on all such checks made against other Peshwah.

Extra Divination: Starting at 2nd level, a Hommett may prepare an extra spell, or gain an extra spell slot, of any level he can normally cast, but only to prepare or cast a Divination spell.

Command Deference (Sp): A Hommett of at least 3rd level may use greater command as a spell-like ability once per day, the caster level and save DC of which are determined as if the Hommett had prepared the spell with his highest spellcasting class. The Hommett may use this ability twice per day at 6th level, and three times per day at 9th level.

Devoted Student: At 4th level, a Hommett gains the Leadership feat, but may only choose a cohort and followers from his own tribe.

Calm Emotions (Sp): Once per day, a Hommett of at least 5th level may use calm emotions, the caster level and save DC of which are determined as if he had prepared the spell with his highest spellcasting level.

Divination Spell Power: At 7th level, a Hommett gains +1 inherent bonus to caster level, and adds +1 to any save DCs, whenever he casts any spell of the Divination school. This ability stacks with the bonuses provided by the Spell Focus and Greater Spell Focus feats.

Hommett

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Respect	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Extra divination	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Command deference 1/day	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Devoted student	—
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Calm emotions	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Command deference 2/day	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Divination spell power	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Know the will of the gods, vision	—
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Command deference 3/day	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	One with the spirits	+1 level of existing spellcasting class

Know the Will of the Gods (Sp): Once per week, a Hommett of 8th level or higher may consult the gods themselves for insight. This functions like the *commune* spell, except the casting time is one hour, there is no XP cost, and the spell must be cast in a special shrine dedicated to one or more Peshwah deities. These shrines are typically only found in a Peshwah encampment or stronghold, although some sacred places, such as the Tower of Salt, are also appropriate.

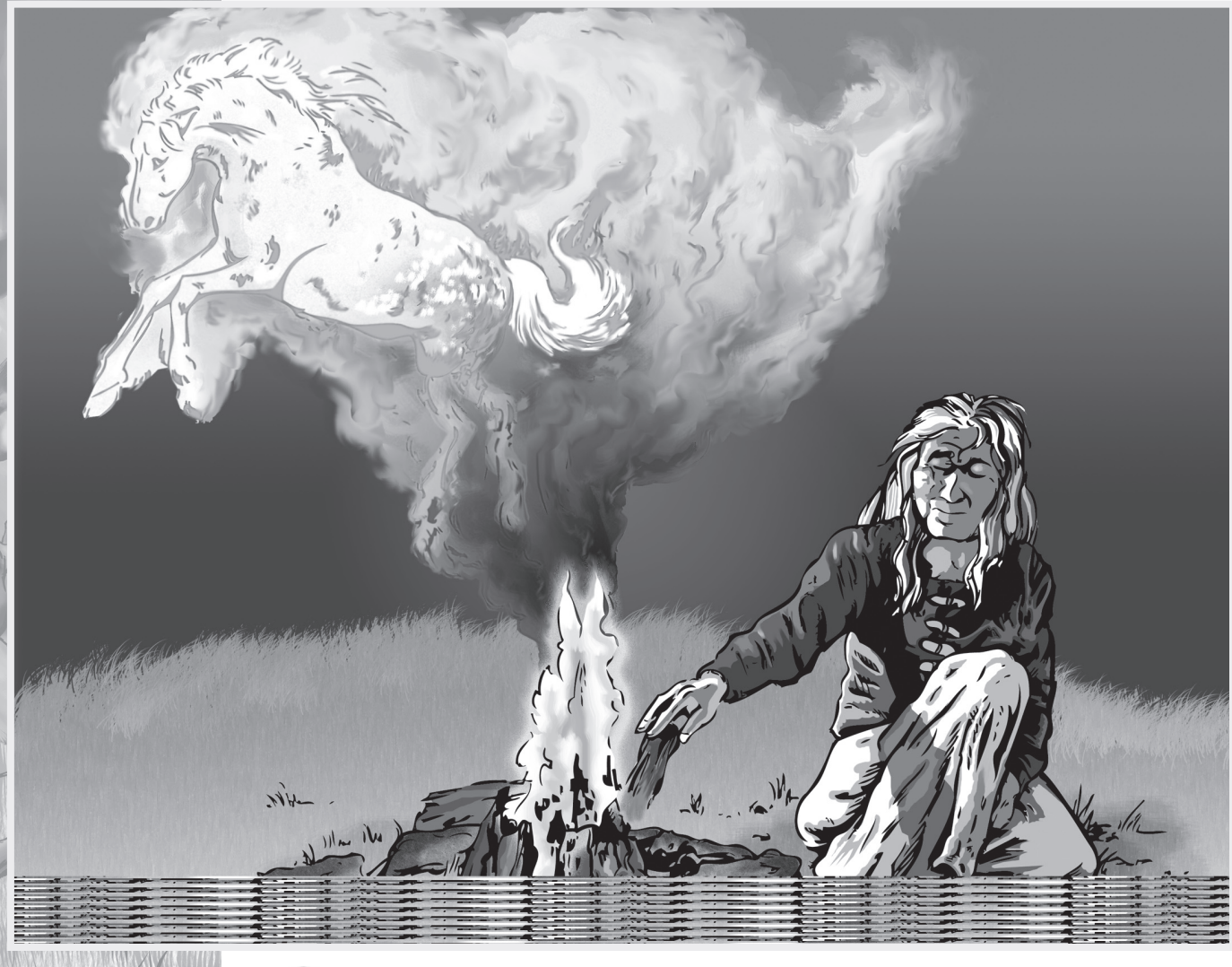
Vision: At 8th level, a Hommett may add the *vision* spell to his spell list. Arcane casters add it to their spellbook, focus, or spells known as appropriate, and divine casters may pray for the spell, as normal. In all cases, vision is a 7th-level spell.

One With the Spirits: When a Hommett reaches 10th level, he has become so attuned to the spirits of the land that he assumes some of their nature. He becomes immune to disease (including supernatural diseases, such as lycanthropy and mummy rot), fatigue, and exhaustion. The Hommett also stops suffering the ill-effects of aging (penalties already gained still apply, and bonuses continue to accrue), but still dies when his time is up.

Horse Brother (Peshwah am-Hakleh)

The most blessed warriors of the Peshwah are those paladins who are gifted with a spirit horse as a special mount. Among those very rare defenders of the people, a few develop a bond of kinship with their horse to a mystic spirit union approaching that of the First Peshwah and the First Horse.

All horse brothers start as paladins, but a few opt to complement their palatine training with the skills of a cleric, fighter, or ranger as well. While the rare ability to summon a spirit horse is viewed with respect and awe by all Peshwah, the horse brother is a walking example of Hak's original design for joining the Peshwah and their horses in the first place. Horse brothers generally consider themselves champions of their people as a whole, leaving behind their tribal ties in order to better devote themselves to protecting all Peshwah.



Followers of Calelrin and Afridhi assassins often target horse brothers, as the very existence of these champions is a flame of hope for the Peshwah, and each flame that is extinguished is a great victory for the darkness. In these days of fear, more horse brothers fall to poison or knife in the dark, than in battle. The death of Hadeen stripped many Peshwah am-Hakleh from the ranks of the people. The Faleem, the Zah, and the Somhak produce the most horse brothers.

Entry Requirements

Race: Peshwah.

Alignment: Lawful good.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Skills: Handle Animal 8 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks, Ride 8 ranks.

Feats: Horse Bond, Improved Horse Bond.

Special: Special mount class ability.

Hit Die: d10

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Craft, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Heal, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (religion), Profession, Ride, and Survival.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Horse Brother prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A horse brother gains no new proficiencies with weapons or armor.

Heal Mount (Sp): Once per day, a horse brother may cast *heal mount* at a caster level equal to his total levels in paladin + horse brother. He may do this an twice per day at 3rd level, and as a free action upon reaching 5th level.

Improved Mounted Combat (Ex): Using Mounted Combat, a horse brother may attempt to negate hits against his mount each round a number of times equal to 1 + his Dex bonus.

Plains Knight: A horse brother may add his class level to his paladin level to determine the special abilities of his special mount. He may continue taking levels in paladin after taking a level of horse brother without penalty. All of the horse brother's special abilities only function if his special mount is a horse.

Beloved of Horses: At 2nd level, a horse brother gains the Beloved of Horses feat. If the horse brother already has this feat, add the horse brother's class level to the Ride check DC while mounted, when attacked. Also, horse-like creatures loathe to attack the horse brother, and will not willingly allow a rider to do so, as normal for the feat. Centaurs, hippogriffs, nightmares, pegasi, and unicorns are affected by this ability.

Shared Lives (Sp): While mounted, a horse brother and his mount are treated as having cast *shield* other on each other; thus, each gains a +1 deflection bonus to AC, a +1 resistance bonus to saves, and damage suffered by either is split evenly between the two (odd points go to the rider). This ability may be dismissed or reinstated as a free action on the horse brother's turn, and stops when the horse brother leaves the saddle. This effect can be dispelled (the horse brother's caster level is equal to his paladin + horse brother levels), but may be renewed as a free action on the horse brother's next action.

A horse brother whose special mount is killed suffers a negative level until his mount is restored or replaced. This negative level cannot be removed in any other way.

Sacred Mount: At 3rd level, the horse brother's devotion to his mount imbues it with sacred energy, granting it the celestial template (MM 31) permanently. This effect does not increase the mount's effective level for purposes of advancing as a special mount.

Run Like Wind (Ex): At 4th level, a horse brother's special mount's land speed increases by 20 feet.

Shared Fates (Ex): Whenever a horse brother of at least 4th level and his special mount are forced to make saving throws against the same effect, if either one succeeds, the other is considered to have succeeded, as well.

Horse Brother

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	*Heal mount* 1/day, improved mounted combat, plains knight
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Beloved of horses, shared lives
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	*Heal mount* 2/day, sacred mount
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Run like wind, shared fates
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	*Heal mount* (free action), child of Hak

Child of Hak (Su): Once per day, a 5th level horse brother may forge a perfect union between his mount and himself as a standard action. This ability may only be activated while the horse brother is mounted on his special mount, and the effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the character's Cha modifier.

While joined, the horse brother becomes a magnificent centaur-like creature, a form that confers the following benefits:

He becomes a Large quadruped (weapons and equipment reshape and resize to fit, and the horse brother may choose whether his own armor or his mount's barding becomes the barding for his new form) with a 10-foot face and a 5-foot reach. The horse brother is no longer considered mounted for purposes of the Mounted Combat feat, or other feats with Mounted Combat as a prerequisite.

The horse brother retains his own hit points (modified for his new Constitution; see below), and personally suffers any damage taken while joined.

- +6 Str, +4 Dex, and +4 Con.
- +4 natural armor bonus; DR 10/magic; SR 20 + Cha modifier; and acid, cold, and electricity resistance 10.
- Base speed equals special mount's base speed.
- Two hoof attacks, each dealing 1d6 + Str bonus damage and are considered magic and good for purposes of overcoming damage reduction. These hoof attacks may be combined with weapon attacks as part of a full attack action, but in which case are considered secondary natural attacks, suffering a –5 penalty to hit and adding only one-half the horse brother's Str bonus to damage.
- Low-light vision and the Scent ability.
- The character gains the Run feat, if he did not possess it already.



At the end of the union, the horse brother and his mount are fatigued for the same amount of time as they were joined. If killed in this form, the horse brother returns to his normal state (remaining dead), but his mount's body disappears, leaving behind any equipment, as usual for a slain paladin's mount. The horse brother can end the union prematurely as a free action, if he so chooses.

Lawgiver of Raelralataen (Shia am-Raelralataen)

Among the followers of the Law Keeper is an order of priest-warriors dedicated to enforcing the law and defending the peace of the Tampul am-Raelralataen in High Tenlish. While the vast majority of lawgivers come from the Faleem clan, the order welcomes Peshwah of any clan who swears to place its duty to the law above any other concern.

Most lawgivers are fighters or rangers, but a fair number of clerics of Raelralataen and paladins are also found among their ranks, as well as a few Peshwah who follow the path of the rogue (to better catch lawbreakers). Lawgivers often work together or with other Peshwah, and always seek to undertake their duties in an orderly and disciplined fashion.

While many lawgivers are dedicated to protecting the Tampul am-Raelralataen in High Tenlish, they may be found throughout the Hak and even in the lands beyond. Lawgivers often act as traveling judges, mediators, and investigators, providing impartial justice to the many septs scattered across the plains. A lawgiver's decision in a matter is considered final unless one party can prove to another lawgiver that the first was bribed, enchanted, or tricked somehow.

Lawgivers pursue fugitives wherever they flee, so they can occasionally be found outside the Hak. In these cases, lawgivers endeavor to adhere to the local laws and make an effort to inform law enforcement officials of their intent to seize a criminal, but do not allow such concerns to stand in the way of seeing justice done.

Entry Requirements

Race: Peshwah.

Alignment: Any lawful.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Profession (lawgiver) 4 ranks, Sense Motive 4 ranks.

Feats: Of the Faleem or Skill Focus (sense motive); Weapon Proficiency (sickle sword).

Special: A prospective lawgiver must demonstrate his dedication to three senior lawgivers. After passing an examination determining his knowledge of the law, the lawgiver accepts a *geas* that prevents him from breaking Raelralataen's Law, unless doing so is the only way to save the life of another Peshwah (but not the lawgiver's own life). A lawgiver breaking the *geas* suffers its ill effects until he receives an atonement from another lawgiver or a cleric of Raelralataen.

Hit Die: d10

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Forgery, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (religion), Listen, Profession, Ride, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A lawgiver of Raelralataen gains no new proficiencies with any weapons or armor.

Smite Lawbreaker (Su): Once per day, a lawgiver may attempt to smite a chaotic creature, or a creature he knows has broken the law, with a melee attack, gaining a +4 bonus to hit and dealing extra damage equal to his class level. If he accidentally smites a creature that does not meet these requirements, the smite has no effect and the attempt is wasted for the day. A lawgiver gains a second daily smite attempt at 5th level, and a third daily smite attempt at 10th level.

Lawgiver of Raelralataen

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Smite lawbreaker 1/day, Weapon Focus
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	*Detect chaos*
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	*Discern lies* 1/day
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Weapon Specialization
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Smite lawbreaker 2/day
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Cloak of order, *discern lies* 2/day
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Hold the guilty
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	Justice never sleeps
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	*Discern lies* 3/day, none hide from the law
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	Smite lawbreaker 3/day

Weapon Focus: All lawgivers of Raelralataen gain Weapon Focus (sickle sword) as a bonus feat. If they already have this feat, they gain an additional +1 to hit when wielding a sickle sword.

Detect Chaos (Sp): A lawgiver of 2nd level or higher may use detect chaos at will, as the spell, with a caster level equal to his lawgiver level.

Discern Lies (Sp): Once per day, a lawgiver of at least 3rd level can invoke an effect similar to a discern lies spell (Will DC 13 + Wis modifier), at a caster level equal to his class level. He gains an additional daily use of this ability at 6th level and again at 9th level.

Weapon Specialization: At 4th level, a lawgiver of Raelralataen gains Weapon Specialization (sickle sword) as a bonus feat. If he already has this feat, he gains an additional +2 on weapon damage rolls using a sickle sword.

Cloak of Order (Sp): Lawgivers of at least 6th level are permanently shrouded in a protection from chaos effect. If the effect is dispelled, the lawgiver may reinstate it as a free action on his next action.

Hold the Guilty (Su): Whenever a lawgiver of 7th level or higher successfully uses his smite lawbreaker ability, the target must also make a Will save (DC 16 + the lawgiver's Wis modifier) or be affected as if by a hold monster spell (with an effective caster level equal to the lawgiver's level).

Justice Never Sleeps (Su): When he reaches 8th level a lawgiver of Raelralataen no longer needs to sleep, and becomes immune to all sleep effects. A lawgiver who casts spells still needs eight hours of rest to prepare spells or recover spell slots.

None Hide From the Law (Su): At 9th level, a lawgiver of Raelralataen gains the ability to pick out lawbreakers from the crowd. The lawgiver sees any creatures who have committed a crime against a Peshwah within the past 24 hours as being limned with faerie fire; thus, such creatures gain a –40 penalty to Hide checks and may not benefit from invisibility effects against the lawgiver. These flames are only visible to the lawgiver, do not illuminate an area, and do not give any insight as to what the nature of the crime committed was. The law of Raelralataen requires that a criminal must be charged with a specific crime when seized, so attacking someone based solely on this ability is itself a breach of both the law and the lawgiver's oath. Creatures under the protection of nondetection, undetectable alignment, or similar magics are entitled to a DC 20 Will save to avoid the effects of this ability.

Mounted Marksman (Hada Peshleh)

The wide, rolling plains of the Hak are naturally conducive to cavalry and archery, so many Peshwah practice mounted archery. Some, however, hone their skills with horse and bow to an uncanny degree.

The mounted marksmen are well respected in their clans, bringing plenty of game to the table in times of peace, and sending plenty of foes to the afterlife in times of war. Most mounted marksmen begin their careers as rangers, but fighters and barbarians also occasionally pursue mastery of mounted archery.

Entry Requirements

Race: Peshwah.

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Skills: Handle Animal 4 ranks, Ride 8 ranks, Spot 2 ranks.

Feats: Horse Bond, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat.

Hit Die: d10

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Craft, Handle Animal, Listen, Profession, Ride, Spot, and Survival.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the mounted marksman prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A mounted marksman gains no new proficiencies with weapons or armor.

Charging Shot (Ex): A mounted marksman can use his mount's momentum to impart extra force to his arrows. During any round in which his mount has moved at least 20 ft. toward his target, a mounted marksman deals an extra 1d6 damage if he is within 60 ft. of his target at the time of the attack. This ability only functions when the mounted marksman attacks from horseback with a longbow or shortbow (composite or otherwise). The extra damage increases to 2d6 at 3rd level, and 3d6 at 5th level. This additional damage does not stack with the damage caused from sneak attacks or other similar abilities. Other damage modifiers, such as Strength or favored enemy status, can stack with this damage.

Improved Mounted Archery: A Hada Peshleh suffers less difficulty shooting from a moving horse than others; the penalties to ranged combat from a moving mount are reduced by 1 (–1 if the mount is taking a double move, –3 if running).

Mounted Marksman

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Charging shot +1d6, improved mounted archery
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Tall in the saddle
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Charging shot +2d6, Trample
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Feather the fallen
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Charging shot +3d6, greater mounted archery

Tall in the Saddle (Ex): At 2nd level, a mounted marksman learns the trick of standing in the saddle to better hit opponents with cover. By making a Balance check (DC 10 for a stationary mount, DC 15 if the mount is moving up to a double move, and DC 25 if the mount is running) as a free action, the mounted marksman may attack opponents who have taken cover behind tower shields; negate the cover bonuses to AC gained from cover less than 8 feet high (including that gained by characters using the "cover" application of the Ride skill); and negate the bonus to AC from crouching or prone targets. Failing this check means that the target continues to enjoy the benefits of cover; failing by 5 or more means that the mounted marksman has fallen off his horse, taking 1d6 damage in the process. A Hada Peshleh who falls from his horse in this fashion may not attempt a Ride check to negate the damage, but may use Tumble, if appropriate. This ability only applies to attacks made with a longbow or shortbow, may only be used against targets within 30 feet, and requires a separate Balance check for each shot. The mounted marksman suffers a –5 penalty to his Balance checks if riding bareback.

Trample: At 3rd level, a Hada Peshleh gains Trample as a bonus feat. If he already has Trample, he instead grants his mount a +2 circumstance bonus on the opposed Strength check made to trample a target.

Feather the Fallen (Ex): Whenever a 4th level Hada Peshleh's mount successfully knocks an enemy prone with a Trample attack, he may immediately make a free attack of opportunity against that enemy using either a longbow or shortbow. This attack does not provoke attacks of opportunity from the target (although it may from other enemies), and the mounted marksman may attempt to use his tall in the saddle ability as well.

Greater Mounted Archery: A mounted marksman of at least 5th level has mastered the art of mounted archery, reducing the penalties to attack from horseback by an additional 1 (no penalty for double moves, –2 when running).



Walker in Winter (Buhndiwoh)

Many Peshwah have lost family members and clan mates to the depredations of the Afridhi. While all are scarred by the loss, some allow the fires of their hatred to consume them. These wrathful souls devote their lives to destroying as many Afridhi as possible, often resorting to the same brutality and vile methods that their hated foes employ.

Most Bundiwoh are rangers, but any Peshwah who has suffered loss at the hands of the Afridhi may be drawn to the class. Buhndiwoh do not typically work together, as most are so caught up in their own vendettas that they grow impatient with others. However, when an Afridhi target seems too powerful or well-protected, a Buhndiwoh occasionally seeks aid from others of her kind, or any others who seem like useful tools in the quest for vengeance. Non-Peshwah who have suffered the same sort of loss can potentially take this class, but must find Peshwah willing to guide them onto the cold and hard path of vengeance.

Entry Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Alignment: Any neutral.

Skills: Hide 10 ranks, Move Silently 10 ranks.

Language: Afridhi.

Feats: Endurance, Horse Bond, Iron Will.

Special: The character must have lost a family member or close friend to the Afridhi, and must spend at least one winter upon the High Hak.

Hit Die: d8

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Climb, Craft, Handle Animal, Hide, Intimidate, Listen, Move Silently, Profession, Ride, Spot, Swim, Survival, Tumble.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the walker in winter prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A walker in winter gains no new proficiency with weapons or armor.

Know the Enemy: A walker in winter gains a +2 bonus to Bluff, Disguise, Hide, Intimidate, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks against Afridhi and creatures with the Fire subtype. She also gains a +2 bonus to weapon damage rolls against Afridhi and creatures with the Fire subtype.

Smite the Hated Foe (Su): Once per day, a walker in winter can attempt to smite an Afridhi or creature with the Fire subtype with a normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma bonus (if any) to the attack roll and deals an extra 1 point of damage per class level. A Bundiwoh who accidentally smites a creature that is neither Afridhi nor of the Fire subtype wastes the attempt. A Bundiwoh can use this ability twice per day at 3rd level, and three times per day at 5th level.

Fire Resistance (Ex): At 2nd level, the frozen rage that motivates a walker in winter allows him to shrug off the fiery attacks of his enemies, granting him fire resistance 10. At 4th level, this fire resistance increases to 20.

Revenge is Cold (Su): From 2nd level, all damage dealt by a Buhndiwoh's melee attacks is considered Cold damage, in addition to its usual type. A Buhndiwoh may suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Diehard: At 3rd level, a Buhndiwoh gains Diehard as a bonus feat. If he already has the Diehard feat, he may select any feat for which he meets all prerequisites.

Flame Turning (Sp): A 4th level Buhndiwoh may cast a special version of *spell turning* on himself once per day, as a sorcerer of his total character level. This ability only functions against spells with the Fire descriptor, and all spells successfully turned deal cold damage rather than fire damage, and gain the Cold descriptor instead of the Fire descriptor.

Walker in Winter

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Know the enemy, smite the hated foe 1/day
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Fire resistance 10, revenge is cold
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Diehard, smite the hated foe 2/day
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Fire resistance 20, flame turning
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Frozen heart strike, smite the hated foe 3/day

Frozen Heart Strike (Su): Whenever a 5th level walker in winter successfully uses his smite the hated foe ability, the target must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15 + Cha modifier) or die instantly. Creatures slain in this fashion freeze solid and instantly shatter into hundreds of pieces, preventing raise dead or other spells that require an intact corpse in order to function properly.

Web Thief (Shiru)

The Shiru are the elite warriors of the Peshneath. They are the members of the tribe most adept at harvesting the webs used to make the Peshwah spider silk armor. Shiru lead the teams of hunters that descend into the deepest and most horrid parts of the Neath Forest. It is these skilled and hardy hunters who bring back the silk of the highest quality from the most fearsome of spiders.

The Shiru are known throughout the Peshwah as fearsome opponents. The taint of the Neath courses through their blood and the poison that manifests as they progress causes them to be viewed with trepidation and fear by other Peshwah. The Neath is one of the darkest places on the High Hak and the Shiru has become one with and been altered by that place.

Rangers and rogues are the most common classes to pursue a career as a web thief, but it is not unusual for the monks of Raelralataen to train in the skills of harvesting spider silk.

Entry Requirements

Base Fort Save: +4.

Skills: Climb 8 ranks, Escape Artist 4 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks.

Special: Favored enemy (Vermin) class feature; must have survived being bitten by a monstrous spider.

Hit Die: d12

Class Skills (4 + Int modifier per level): Balance, Climb, Craft, Escape Artist, Heal, Hide, Jump, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (nature), Listen, Move Silently, Profession, Search, Spot, Survival, Tumble, and Use Rope.

Class Features

The following are class features of the web thief prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A Shiru gains no new proficiencies with weapons or armor.

Spider Dodge (Ex): A web thief is adept at avoiding the attacks of spiders, as well as other vermin and spider-like creatures (such as aranea, bebiliths, driders, phase spiders, and retrievers). He gains a dodge bonus to AC equal to his web thief level against such creatures.

Venom Resistance (Ex): Having personally suffered bites from numerous creatures over the course of his career, a web thief quickly becomes inured to venoms of all sorts. A web thief gains a +3 bonus to Fortitude saves made to resist the effects of venom from spiders and spider-like creatures (including the creatures listed above), and a +1 bonus to saves against all other poisons.

Climb Speed (Ex): At 2nd level, a web thief has become so adroit at maneuvering through the trees of the Neath that he gains a base climb speed of 15 feet. This speed increases to 30 feet at 4th level.

Slip Web (Ex): Whenever a web thief of 2nd level or higher is entangled in any fashion, or caught in a web (including the *web* spell), he may attempt to wriggle out with an Escape Artist check as a free action. If the web thief fails this attempt, he may still try to escape the effect as normal, including attempting another Escape Artist check.

Slow Fall (Ex): At 2nd level, a web thief learns how to use a wall, tree, or similar surface to slow a fall. See the monk class feature (PH 41). The web thief may reduce a fall by 20 feet at 2nd level, and by 40 feet upon reaching 4th level.

Improved Favored Enemy: At 3rd level, the web thief's favored enemy (Vermin) bonus increases by +2.

Web Thief

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Spider dodge, venom resistance
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Climb speed 15 ft., slip web, slow fall 20 ft.
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Improved favored enemy +2, poison
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Climb speed 30 ft., slow fall 40 ft.
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Freedom of movement, venom immunity

Poison (Ex): An experienced Shiru of at least 3rd level has been bitten so many times that his blood itself is toxic. As a standard action, the web thief may inflict 1 point of damage on himself to coat a piercing or slashing weapon with his venomous blood.

> Venomous Blood; injury; Fort save DC (10 + web thief level + Con modifier), 1d4 Str/1d4 Str. The venom lasts for up to one minute and is good for but one strike. The blood venom loses all potency after one minute.

Freedom of Movement (Sp): A 5th level Shiru may call upon a *freedom of movement* effect for a number of rounds per day equal to 5 + the character's Dex modifier (if positive). Activating this ability is a free action, and may even be used on another creature's turn. Rounds of usage of this ability may be divided up among multiple uses.

Venom Immunity (Ex): At 5th level, a web thief becomes immune to all poison.

Wind Caller (Sheh am-Ulo)

The plains of the Hak are in constant motion, ruffled by the ever-present winds. The wind is as much a part of the land as the grass and horses, and there are some spellcasters who learn to harness its power for their own ends. These strange arcanists are the wind callers.

Wind callers tend to be loners, preferring to spend their time studying the air currents or soaring to new places. Most retain some ties to their former clans, however, and can occasionally be called upon for aid or advice. Since wind callers focus so much of their efforts on transient matters of weather, they have little in common with the Hommett and other elders of the clans, quickly growing bored by the daily duties of camp life. Despite their desire for solitude, a growing number of wind callers have been moved to action against the Afridhi invading the Hak. While many are concerned about the plight of the Peshwah in the face of these savage foes, most are merely angry about the billowing clouds of smoke that seem to follow the Afridhi on their conquests.



Many wokan find the path of the wind caller appealing, as do druids and the occasional Peshwah sorcerer. There have even been a small number of Peshwah trained as outlander wizards, who have managed to unlock the secrets of the air and taken their knowledge to the lands beyond the Hak.

Entry Requirements

Race: Peshwah.

Skills: Concentration 4 ranks, Knowledge (local) 2 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks, Spellcraft 4 ranks, Survival 2 ranks.

Feats: Elemental Spell Focus (air).

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 3rd-level spells, including gust of wind.

Hit Die: d4

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Concentration, Craft, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Listen, Profession, Spellcraft, and Survival.

Class Features

The following are class features of the wind caller prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A wind caller gains no new proficiencies with weapons or armor.

Spells Per Day/Spells Known: A wind caller continues training in spellcasting as well as learning the secrets of the winds. At each level gained in the wind caller class, he gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class level. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If he had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a wind caller, he must decide to which class to add each level for the purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Expanded Spell Knowledge: Wind callers make a special study of all magics dealing with the wind. The following spells are added to their spell lists or may be added to spell books when the wind caller is able to cast spells of that level, as appropriate. The spells may be considered either arcane or divine, depending upon the individual wind caller's magical tradition.

0-level—*breeze, elemental globe (air only), puff*
1st—*dust devil, lesser elemental orb (air only), elemental bolt*
2nd—*wind wall*
3rd—*elemental ball (air only), air blades of slashing retribution*
4th—*elemental summons I (air only)*
5th—*elemental summons II (air only)*
6th—*elemental summons III (air only), greater elemental orb (air only)*
7th—*elemental summons IV (air only)*
8th—*elemental summons V (air only)*
9th—*elemental summons VI (air only)*

Wind's Embrace (Su): A wind caller is perpetually surrounded by gusts and breezes. Small unprotected flames, such as candles, lamps, and torches, within 10 feet of a wind caller have a 50% chance each round of being extinguished.

These winds grant a wind caller a +4 bonus on saves against gas attacks, such as those created by a stinking cloud spell or a green dragon's breath weapon. In addition, this class feature grants additional boons at various levels of the class:

Wind Caller

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Expanded spell knowledge, wind's embrace (feather fall)	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	—	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Air augmentation	+1 level of existing class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Wind's embrace (breeze)	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Blasting wind	+1 level of existing class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Fly (60 ft.)	+1 level of existing class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Wind's embrace (wind wall)	+1 level of existing class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	—	+1 level of existing class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Fly (90 ft.)	+1 level of existing class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Spirit of the wind	+1 level of existing class

At 1st level, the wind's embrace acts as a constant feather fall effect that activates whenever the wind caller falls more than 5 feet.

At 4th level, the wind caller gains a +2 deflection bonus to AC against ranged weapon attacks, exactly as if under the constant effects of a breeze spell.

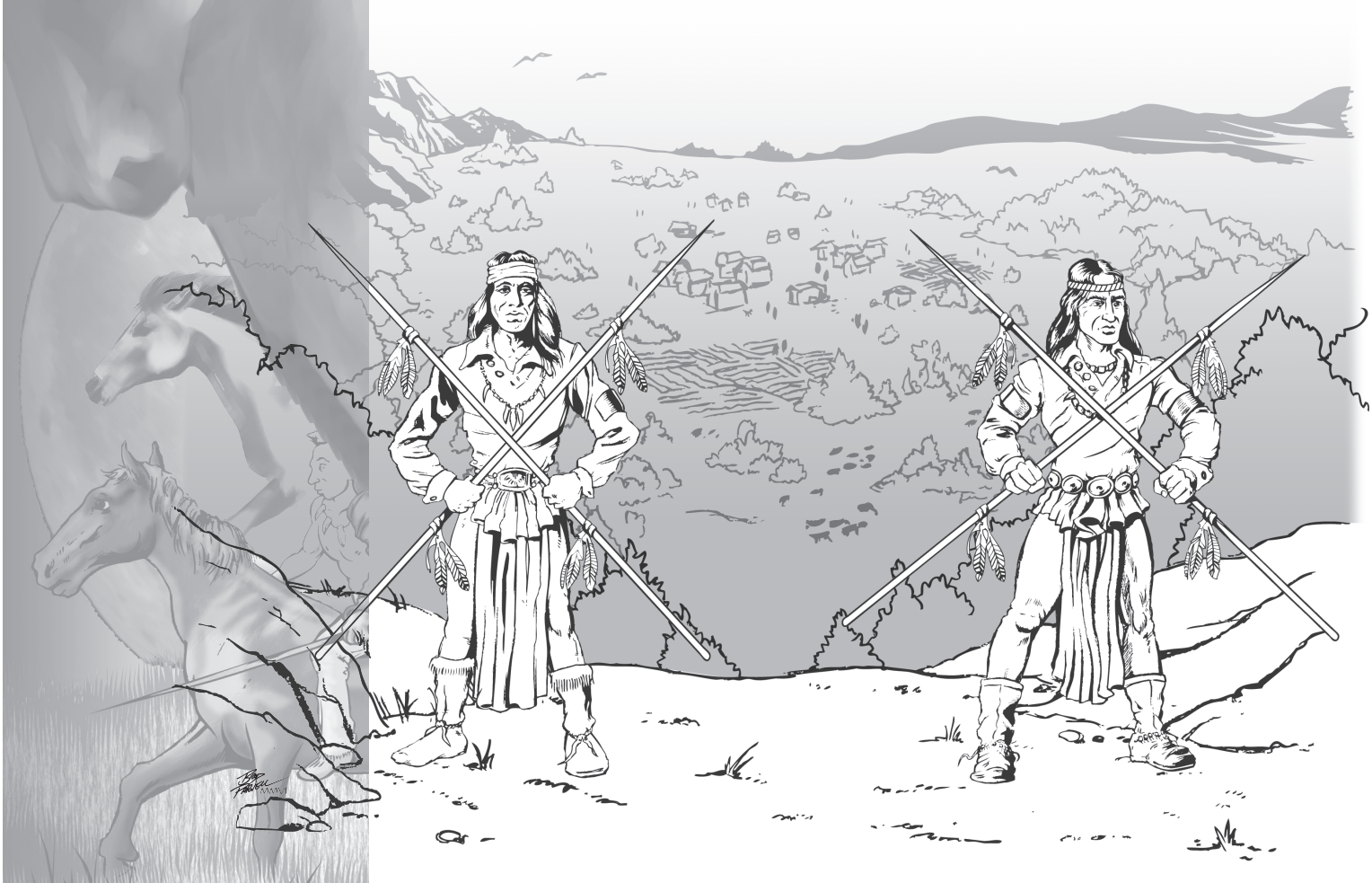
At 7th level, ranged weapon attacks against the wind caller automatically fail, as if the wind caller were surrounded by a wind wall spell. (This ability has no effect on large ranged weapons, such as ballista bolts or a giant's thrown boulder.)

Air Augmentation: When a wind caller of at least 3rd level casts a Conjuration (summoning) spell to summon a creature with the Air subtype, the summoned creature gains +4 Strength and Constitution, exactly as if the wind caller possessed the Augment Summoning feat. If the wind caller already has Augment Summoning, this ability has no additional effect.

Blasting Wind (Su): Upon reaching 5th level, a wind caller is able to imbue his damaging spells with the power of a gale. Whenever a wind caller casts a spell that deals energy damage of any sort, it is accompanied by a roaring wind that may push creatures affected by the spell. Creatures that fail the save against the spell (if there is one) are subjected to a bull rush attempt as if from a Medium creature with an effective Strength bonus equal to the level of the spell. The bull rush pushes the subject directly away from the spell's point of origin (if it is a burst, emanation, or spread) or away from the caster.

Fly (Sp): A 6th-level wind caller can fly (as the spell) for up to one hour per day. His flight speed increases to 90 ft. (good maneuverability) at 9th level.

Spirit of the Wind: At 10th level, a wind caller transcends the flesh and becomes a true spirit of the wind. His type changes to Elemental (air) and he stops accruing penalties from aging and can't be aged magically (though he still passes on when his time is up). He gains darkvision 60 ft.; immunity to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning; and is no longer subject to flanking or critical hits. He no longer needs to breathe, eat, drink, or sleep (though still requires 8 hours of rest to prepare spells.) He can no longer be raised from death, however, but may be restored to life by limited wish, wish, miracle, or true resurrection.



New Feats

Like the preceding prestige classes, the following feats are found almost exclusively among the Peshwah. Those with the [General] descriptor can appear outside the Peshwah, but those with the [Racial] descriptor by definition do not.

Beloved of Horses [Racial]

Your tie to Hak's children is particularly strong, and they do their best to protect you.

Prerequisite: Horse Bond.

Benefit: Normal horses will not attack you. Enemies mounted on horses must make a Ride check (DC 20 + your Cha modifier) as a move action to attack you in melee. If they fail, they take a –4 penalty to all attack rolls against you this turn.

Brace Grazer Spear [General]

You are skilled at using a grazer spear to fend off attacking creatures.

Prerequisite: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (grazer spear), Str 13+.

Benefit: When you set a grazer spear against a charge, a successful hit forces the creature to stop 10 ft. away, foiling its attack unless it has reach.

Normal: Setting a spear against a charge deals double damage, but the foe may continue its attack.

Special: A fighter may select Brace Grazer Spear as one of his bonus feats.

Horse Bond [Racial]

The Peshwah of the Plains of Hak are so attuned to their horses that they share a nearly supernatural bond with them.

Prerequisite: Must be Peshwah.

Benefit: A Peshwah can create a seemingly magical bond between himself and a single horse. Creating the bond takes one week per point of Challenge Rating of the horse. When the bond is created, a great friendship exists between the horse and the Peshwah. This enables you to communicate with your bonded horse as if using a *speak with animals* spell. Further, your horse is positively affected by its relationship with you. If your bonded horse is a steppes charger of any kind, it gains one ability of your choice from the horse breeding chart. This adaptation may not exceed the maximum allowed for each breed. Normal horses do not get this benefit. Only one bond of this type can exist for a Peshwah at a time. If you are ever permanently separated from your bonded horse, or if the bonded horse dies, the bond is broken and you take a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for one week due to the trauma. This penalty applies even if the horse is ultimately raised from the dead. After this mourning period, you may bond with a new horse or reset a previously existing bond.

Note: This revision constitutes an official update to this feat.

Horse Bond, Greater [Racial]

Your mount and you are almost of one body and spirit.

Prerequisite: Horse Bond, Improved Horse Bond.

Benefit: You develop the supernatural ability to create an effect between you and your mount identical to a shield other spell, except that it has a duration of only one hour per day. Further, your horse is positively affected by its relationship with you. All steppes chargers may add one ability from the horse breeding chart. These adaptations may not exceed the maximum allowed for each breed. Normal horses do not get this benefit. If you are ever permanently separated from your bonded horse, or if the bonded horse dies, the bond is broken and you take a –3 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for one week due to the extreme trauma. This penalty applies even if the horse is ultimately raised from the dead. After this mourning period, you may bond with a new horse or reset a previously existing bond.

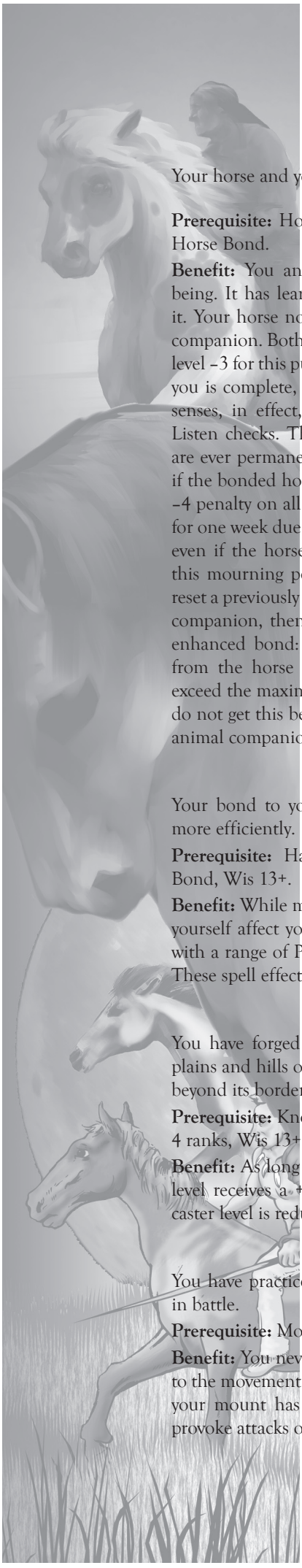
Horse Bond, Improved [Racial]

You further enhance the bond you share with your horse.

Prerequisite: Horse Bond.

Benefit: As Horse Bond, with the added benefit that the Peshwah creates an empathic link between himself and the bonded horse. The empathic link has a range of 1 mile. You cannot see through the horse's eyes with this ability, but you can communicate telepathically. This is a supernatural ability. Because of the empathic link between you and the horse, you have the same connection to an item or place that the horse does, just like a master and his familiar. Improving the horse bond takes one week per point of Challenge Rating of the horse. Further, your horse is positively affected by its relationship with you. All steppes chargers may add one additional ability from the horse breeding chart. This adaptation may not exceed the maximum allowed for each breed. Normal horses do not get this benefit. If you are ever permanently separated from your bonded horse, or if the bonded horse dies, the bond is broken and you take a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for one week due to the extreme trauma. This penalty applies even if the horse is ultimately raised from the dead. After this mourning period, you may bond with a new horse or reset a previously existing bond.

Note: This revision constitutes an official update to this feat.



Horse Bond, Ultimate [Racial]

Your horse and you have achieved a mystical connection.

Prerequisite: Horse Bond, Greater Horse Bond, Improved Horse Bond.

Benefit: You and your horse are extensions of the same being. It has learned from you and you have learned from it. Your horse now functions as if it were a ranger's animal companion. Both heavy and light steppes chargers function at level –3 for this purpose. Finally, the telepathic bond between you is complete, allowing you and your horse to share your senses, in effect, always assisting each other on Spot and Listen checks. This telepathy has a range of 1 mile. If you are ever permanently separated from your bonded horse, or if the bonded horse dies, the bond is broken and you take a –4 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks for one week due to the extreme trauma. This penalty applies even if the horse is ultimately raised from the dead. After this mourning period, you may bond with a new horse or reset a previously existing bond. If you already have an animal companion, then your horse is alternatively affected by the enhanced bond: All steppes chargers may add one ability from the horse breeding chart. This adaptation may not exceed the maximum allowed for each breed. Normal horses do not get this benefit. Only characters who already have an animal companion receive this latter benefit.

Horse Magic [Racial]

Your bond to your mount allows you channel your spells more efficiently.

Prerequisite: Handle Animal 4 ranks, Improved Horse Bond, Wis 13+.

Benefit: While mounted, you may have any spell you cast on yourself affect your mount as well. You may also cast spells with a range of Personal on your mount instead of yourself. These spell effects end if you leave the saddle.

Magic of the Hak [General]

You have forged a connection to the power found in the plains and hills of the Hak, but at the cost of reduced power beyond its borders.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks, Knowledge (local) 4 ranks, Wis 13+.

Benefit: As long as you are in the Hak, your effective caster level receives a +2 bonus. Outside the Hak, your effective caster level is reduced by –1.

Mounted Casting [General]

You have practiced the art of casting spells from horseback in battle.

Prerequisite: Mounted Combat, Con 13+.

Benefit: You never need to make Concentration checks due to the movement of your mount. During any round in which your mount has attacked an adjacent enemy, you do not provoke attacks of opportunity for casting spells.

Of the Adiel [Racial]

You are a child of the Adiel clan, renowned for their horsemanship.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Adiel clan, Ride 1 rank.

Benefit: While mounted, your mount gains a +2 insight bonus to all saves.

Of the Briela [Racial]

You are a child of the Briela clan, known as far-traveling wanderers and seekers of the Bow of Hadeen.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Briela clan, Gather Information 1 rank.

Benefit: Diplomacy and Gather Information are always class skills. In addition, you may immediately learn one humanoid or monstrous humanoid language.

Of the Bortai [Racial]

You are a child of the Bortai clan, the toughest and most fearsome raiders of the Peshwah.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Bortai clan, Intimidate 1 rank.

Benefit: Gain 2 permanent hit points and a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks.

Of the Faleem [Racial]

You are a child of the Faleem clan, dedicated to maintaining the law of Raelralataen.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Faleem clan, Sense Motive 1 rank.

Benefit: Sense Motive is always a class skill. Gain a +2 bonus to Sense Motive checks.

Of the Irfat [Racial]

You are a child of the Irfat clan, guardians of the Crypt of the Horselords.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Irfat clan, Knowledge (religion) 1 rank.

Benefit: Gain a +3 bonus to saves vs. fear and energy drain effects.

Of the Leron [Racial]

You are a child of the Leron clan, defenders of the Valley of the Ancients.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Leron clan, Survival 1 rank.

Benefit: Gain a +2 bonus to resist the effects of hot weather and dehydration and a +2 bonus to Survival checks.

Of the Ornidri [Racial]

You are a child of the Ornidri clan, famed for the elite Woodclose Rangers.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Ornidri clan, Spot 1 rank.

Benefit: Spot is always a class skill. Gain a +3 bonus to Spot checks made outdoors during the day.

Of the Peshneath [Racial]

You are a child of the Peshneath clan, whose members brave the dangers of the Neath to harvest giant spider silk.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Peshneath clan, Climb 1 rank.

Benefit: Climb and Escape Artist are always class skills. Gain a +1 bonus to saves against poison.

Of the Qulaam [Racial]

You are a child of the Qulaam clan, who have made the rivers their domain.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Qulaam clan, Swim 1 rank.

Benefit: Swim is always a class skill. Gain a +2 bonus to Swim checks. You may take the Horse Bond feats and apply their benefits to dire weasels (though they will not, of course, receive any bonus abilities from the horse breeding chart).

Of the Somhak [Racial]

You are a child of the Somhak clan, the true Sons of Hak.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Somhak clan, Diplomacy 1 rank.

Benefit: Diplomacy is always a class skill. Once per day, you may re-roll any one Diplomacy check. You must use the result of the second roll.

Of the Sufz [Racial]

You are a child of the Sufz clan, whose piety is overshadowed only by their tragic past.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Sufz clan, Knowledge (religion) 1 rank.

Benefit: Knowledge (religion) is always a class skill. Gain a +1 bonus to Knowledge (religion) checks. Gain a +1 bonus to Will saves.

Of the Zah [Racial]

You are a child of the Zah clan, the sacred clan of prophets and seers.

Prerequisite: Peshwah of the Zah clan, Knowledge (history) 1 rank.

Benefit: Once per day, you may gain a +2 insight bonus to one saving throw. You must declare use of this bonus before making the roll.

Touched by the Deceiver [Racial]

Calelrin marked you the day of your birth, granting you a facility for bending the truth.

Prerequisite: Peshwah.

Benefit: Once per day, you may add +5 to the die roll on any one Bluff check. You must declare use of this bonus before making the roll.

Special: You may select this feat only at 1st level.

Touched by the Great Archer [Racial]

Hadeen has laid his hand upon your family, granting great prowess with the bow.

Prerequisite: Good alignment, proficient with longbow or shortbow, Peshwah.

Benefit: Gain a +1 luck bonus to attack rolls made with a longbow or shortbow from horseback.

Special: You may select this feat only at 1st level.

Touched by the Thinker [Racial]

Yoosef has granted you a keen intellect and facility for learning.

Prerequisite: Peshwah, Int 13+.

Benefit: Gain a +1 luck bonus to all Knowledge checks.

Special: You may select this feat only at 1st level.

Wheeling Mount [General]

You are well trained in using your mount's movement to avoid attacks.

Prerequisite: Ride 4 ranks, Mounted Combat.

Benefit: While mounted on a horse, you gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC against melee attacks. You do not receive this AC bonus against ranged attacks.

Special: A fighter may select this feat as a bonus feat.



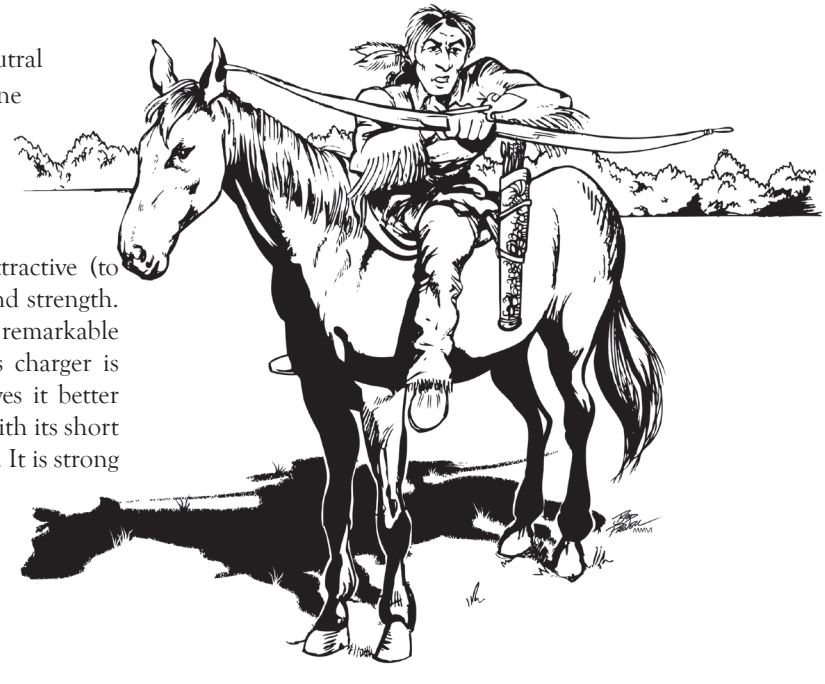
Appendix: Peshwah Animals

This section provides statistics for animals mentioned in earlier chapters, the Peshwah steppes chargers and the Qulaami dire weasels, along with the format for the Augmented Animal subtype.

Peshwah Steppes Charger (Peshleh)

Light Charger	Heavy Charger
Large Augmented Animal	**Large Augmented Animal**
Hit Dice: 3d8+12 (25 hp)	5d8+20 (42 hp)
Initiative: +1	+2
Speed: 60 ft. (12squares)	50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class: 17 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural)	19 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+7	+3/+10
Attack: Hoof +5 melee (1d4+3)	Hoof +7 melee (1d6+4)
Full Attack: 2 hooves +5 melee (1d4+3)	2 hooves +7 melee (1d6+4) and bite +2 melee (1d4+2)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: —	—
Special Qualities: Scent, durable mount, Diehard, low-light vision	Scent, durable mount, Diehard, low-light vision
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2	Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +2
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 2	Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills: Listen +4, Spot +4	Listen +5, Spot +5
Feats: Run, Endurance	Run, Endurance
Environment: Plains	Plains
Organization: Herd (2–24)	Herd (2–24)
Challenge Rating: 2	3
Alignment: Neutral	Neutral
Treasure: None	None
Advancement: —	—
Level Adjustment: —	—

Steppes chargers might appear small and unattractive (to some), but these horses boast great endurance and strength. They are stocky, with thick shaggy coats that show remarkable variability in color among the tribes. A steppes charger is tough and stubborn, with a dense hide that gives it better protection than its more graceful cousins. Even with its short legs, a charger can move swiftly for long distances. It is strong and able to carry as much as a warhorse.



Combat

Since the Afridhi invasions, Peshwah are training steppes charger foals to defend their riders in combat. Light chargers are trained to use their front hooves in combat, while the larger heavy chargers are taught to use their front hooves and to bite, as well. The Peshwah rely on their horses' keen senses to alert them to any trouble, normally posting at least two guards to watch how the horses react at night.

Bonded Steppes Chargers develop a profound and intimate relationship with their rider. When a human is severed from the bond, the loss is traumatic. When a steppes charger is severed from the bond, the loss is even more so. Steppes Chargers will go into a rage if their bonded partner is killed, attacking anything or anyone they perceive as responsible until they or their target is slain. Steppes chargers that lose their bonded rider will not normally accept another bond mate, unless the new bondsmen is a kinsmen or a mate of the horse's former partner.

Diehard: Steppes chargers are very durable. When in the presence of their bonded rider, they gain the Diehard feat.

Durable Mounts (Ex): Steppes chargers are durable mounts. When spurred by their riders, they do not take damage, as and as result are capable of hard rides over long distance. That is, when ridden at a hustle or a forced march, steppes chargers take nonlethal damage rather than lethal damage.

Carrying Capacities: A light load for the average light charger is up to 230 pounds; a medium load, 231– 460 pounds; and a heavy load, 461–690 pounds. A light charger can drag 3,450 pounds. A light load for a heavy charger is up to 300 pounds; a medium load, 301–600 pounds; and a heavy load, 601–900 pounds. A heavy charger can drag 4,500 pounds.



Augmented Animal Subtype

An augmented animal is a living, nonhuman creature, usually a vertebrate with no magical abilities and no innate capacity for culture. Augmented animals reflect the effects of long term eugenics and breeding at the hands of another intelligent species. They are, as a result, exceptional in their type and more intelligent.

Features: An augmented animal has the following features (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry).

— 8-sided Hit Dice.

— Base attack bonus equal to 3/4 total Hit Dice (as cleric).

— Good Fortitude and Reflex saves.

— Skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1) per Hit Die, with quadruple skill points for the first Hit Die.

Traits: An augmented animal possesses the following traits (unless otherwise noted in a creature's entry).

— Intelligence score of 3–5. (Augmented animals have the ability to understand the language of their breeders, but cannot speak that language.)

— Low-light vision.

— **Alignment:** Usually neutral on at least one axis (moral or ethical), or both.

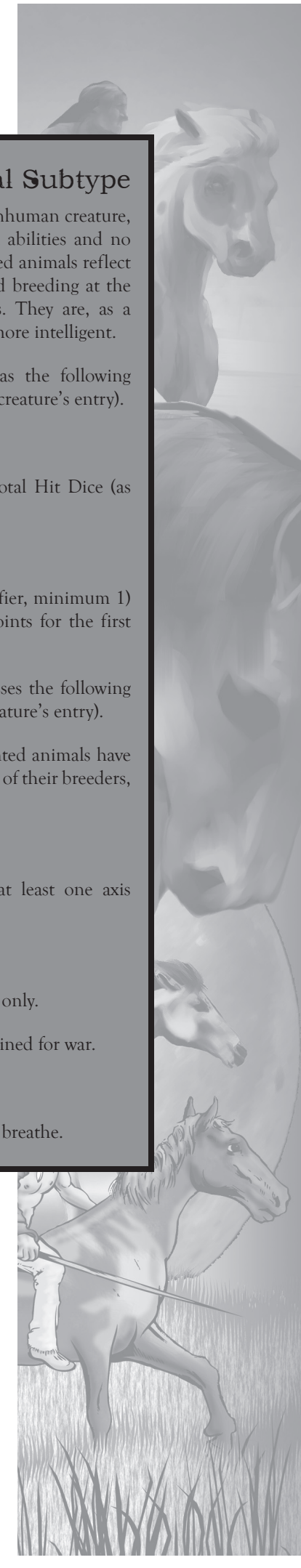
— **Treasure:** None.

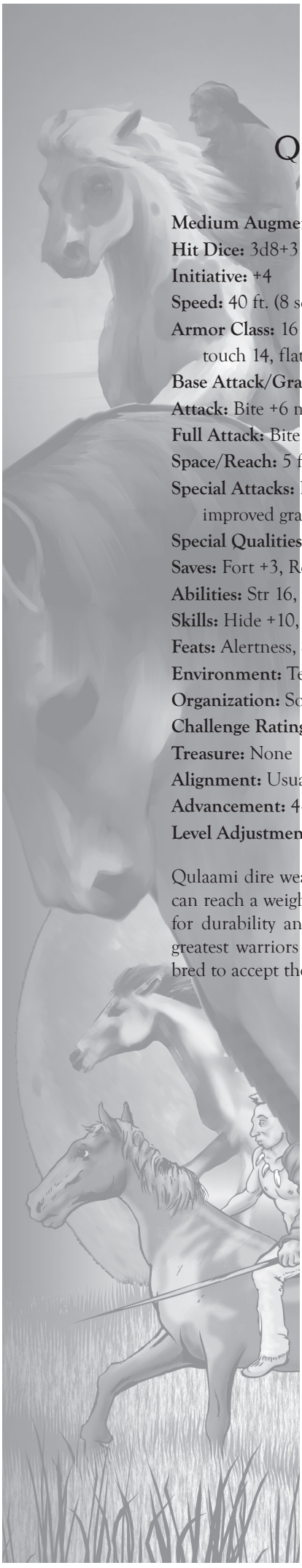
— Proficient with its natural weapons only.

— Proficient with no armor unless trained for war.

— Can be raised or resurrected.

— Augmented animals eat, sleep, and breathe.





Qulaami Dire Weasel (Peshlehla)

Medium Augmented Animal
Hit Dice: 3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class: 16 (+4 Dex, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+4
Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d6+4)
Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d6+4)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Diehard, favored enemy, gnaw, improved grab
Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 11
Skills: Hide +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +10, Spot +5
Feats: Alertness, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse[B]
Environment: Temperate hills and plains
Organization: Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually neutral
Advancement: 4–6 HD (Medium); 7–9 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment: —

Qulaami dire weasels can grow to be up to 10 feet long and can reach a weight of 700 pounds. The Qulaam breed them for durability and size, and the largest are bonded to the greatest warriors of the Qulaam. Qulaami dire weasels are bred to accept the Peshwah Horse Bond feats.

Combat

Dire weasels are stealthy and cunning hunters. This makes them ideal partners to the Qulaam, who are known among the Peshwah for their shrewd tactical sense.

Diehard (Ex): Qulaami dire weasels respond well to the bond. When in the presence of their bonded rider, they gain Diehard as a bonus feat.

Favored Enemy: Qulaami dire weasels receive a +2 racial bonus on all skill checks and bite damage rolls against snakes or snake-like creatures (such as couatl, medusas, nagas, and yuan-ti).

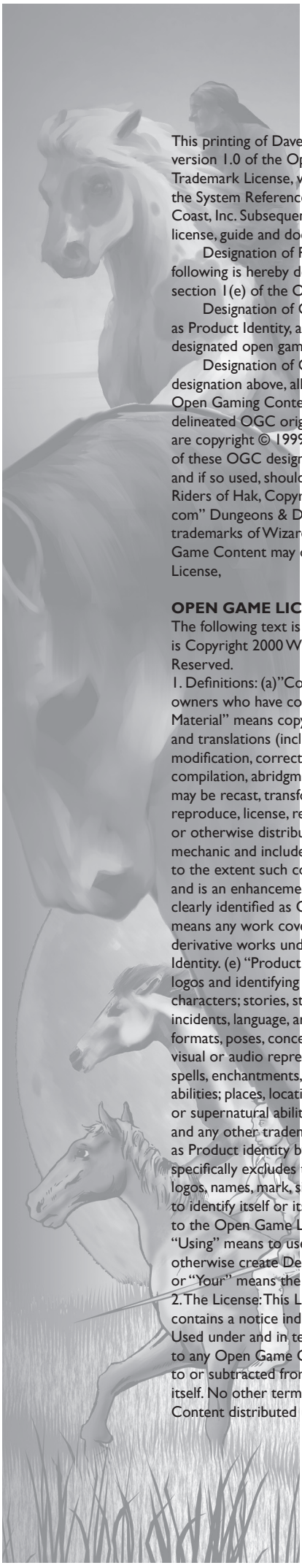
Gnaw (Ex): A dire weasel deals automatic bite damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the Qualaami dire weasel must hit with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it gets a hold and can gnaw. A Qulaami dire weasel can use either its Strength modifier or its Dexterity modifier for grapple checks.

Carrying Capacities: A light load for a medium Qulaami dire weasel is up to 114 pounds; a medium load, 114–230 pounds; and a heavy load, 231–345 pounds. A Qulaami dire weasel can drag 1,725 pounds.







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Riders of Hak

Children of the horsegod Hak, the Peshwah believe they are a chosen people. Birthed to protect Hak's sacred lands and guide Hak's sacred horses, they are brothers and sisters of his divine spirit, and feel they hold a particular destiny and a special place in this, their land. From the rocky peaks of the High Hak to the dusty floor of the Valley of the Ancients, the tribes of the Peshwah roam.

Horseman, nomad, prophet, merchant, warrior... each is a face of the Peshwah.

Welcome to Riders of Hak, the definitive sourcebook on the Peshwah for Dave Arneson's Blackmoor. Within this book, you will find everything needed to expand upon the presence of the Peshwah people in the lands of Blackmoor, or even to introduce the horsemen and their ways into another game setting.

Requires use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
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